

*Full Length Research Paper*

## **Mentoring: A model for cultivating leadership competencies in Kenyan women religious**

**Jane Wakahiu, Ph.D.**

Executive Director of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) and Project Manager, Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI), Marywood University, [jwakahiu@marywood.edu](mailto:jwakahiu@marywood.edu), phone 570-961-4700, fax 5703406068

Accepted September 9, 2013

**Encouraging leadership development in African women religious is an essential strategy to build their confidence to take on leadership positions and execute decisions efficiently in their organizations. Using twelve Kenyan women religious participants of a three-year, Hilton Foundation-supported Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) program, this qualitative case study examines the role of mentoring as a strategy to propagate meaningful leadership competencies and transfer of knowledge and skills to the trainees' ministries and communities. Also, the study assesses the best instructional practices used to deliver instruction to facilitate transfer of skills to the trainees' workplaces. The design of the study was drawn from the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003). Methodology consisted of on-site, in-depth interviews and field observations of the skills trainees practiced in their ministries. Findings indicate that mentoring is a fundamental strategy that cultivated both career functions, to carry on leadership duties efficiently, and psychosocial support to improve work performance in mentors and mentees. The mentorship relationship generated a new level of discourse in their ministerial management; they became agents of change, and increased their self-efficacy and personal and professional growth. Using both international and local faculty enhanced instruction and multiple leadership perspectives. The study confirms that on-the-job mentoring programs can be a strategy to encourage women in Kenya to take on leadership positions and can build confidence, self-efficacy and a capacity to respond to complex organizational challenges.**

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Leadership, Instructional practices

### **Introduction**

In the United States, mentoring women is popular in academic and business circles and is considered a key individual and career development resource (Schaller, 1996; Robertson, 1996; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005). A mentor is an individual who is believed to have reached a certain level of success, and who has the ability to share the secrets of advancement with less-experienced persons by providing mentorship and protection (Schaller, 1996). Mentorship refers to a relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable individual guides an aspiring individual. In practice, mentoring programs pair a junior with a senior executive (Douglas, 1997; McCauley & Douglas, 1998) and sometimes with a peer (Douglas, 1997) to facilitate needed skills for growth of a mentee. The mentor's guidance and protection is rewarded by raising the mentee to a higher position. Researchers have revealed that more women encounter a continuum of barriers including struggle for access and success in academic, career and corporate places (Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts, 2009; Hausma, 2003; Rolf, 2007). Thus, mentoring may be a strategy to support and encourage

women in academia and corporate institutions and to promote career development. According to Bandura (1986), human behavior is learned through observation and through modeling others. In their research on the application of Social Learning Theory to leadership, Charbonneau, Barling and Kelloway (2000) found that people tend to mirror behavior exhibited by their parents/seniors, and exhibit these behaviors with their peers. Mentoring occurs through observation and modeling. Therefore, the mentoring process may promote and nurture talents and skills and enhance the self-efficacy women need to achieve their career goals, and may also promote the transfer of similar skills to other women.

There are few researchers that have examined the mentoring experiences of African women (Thomson & Dey, 1998; Grant & Simmons, 2008). Moreover, Sikazwe (2006), Stromquist (2002), and Salvaterra et al (2009) indicated that there is need for study on sub-Saharan women's leadership development. Sikwzwe (2006), when studying the development of women's leadership in rural communities in Zambia, found that there is

dire need for women to be more visible in their own development and to be part of decision making processes (Sikazwe, 2006). However, leadership literature has not provided studies that examine the mentoring experiences of women religious (Catholic sisters) of sub-Saharan Africa, nor has it examined the impacts mentoring would have on the academic, career, and psychosocial advancement of these women. In this paper, *women religious* refers to *Catholic sisters*, women who consciously and willingly make the choice to engage in charitable works and respond to humanitarian needs in the communities they serve. There are over 5,600 Catholic sisters in Kenya. All are involved in running a variety of programs and institutions including schools, healthcare centers, social welfare and pastoral programs among other activities. In this study, I examined the impact of mentoring as explained by 12 Kenyan women religious participants of a 3-year, Conrad N. Hilton-supported Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) program. These women are leaders in a variety of programs including schools, healthcare facilities, social welfare and pastoral programs. They were selected to participate in the program because they could practice and mentor their workforce on the knowledge and skills they gained from the program.

SLDI is a multi-track (finance, administration, project management and basic technology) leadership development program envisioned by Steven Hilton, CEO and President of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Specifically SLDI is geared towards the capacity building of Catholic sisters in Africa. The program is implemented by the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) and Marywood University. A mentoring component was built into the SLDI. Participants were required to mentor three or more co-workers on the knowledge and skills they acquired. It was assumed that building the mentoring requirement component into the program would expedite the creation and dissemination of best leadership practices in the home organizations of participants. The requirement afforded trainees an opportunity to read, understand and internalize the concepts so that they could effectively coach their colleagues and co-workers.

Boreen et al. (2009) posited that the mentoring concept grew out of a tradition in which the older and wiser were perceived to guide the young and aspiring leaders. Apprentice relationships were traditional among the blacksmiths, builders, healers, and rainmakers of Kenya, for example, where no formal schooling existed until recently. Traditionally, it was understood that the older members of society had a responsibility to guide and nurture the less-experienced young so as to pass on conventional values. In the family setting, aunts and uncles were to mentor nieces and nephews, because they were perceived as more experienced and possessed the ability to guide young adults during their transition to adulthood to become adult males and females who were ready to start a family. These relationships can be perceived as mentorship because the older guided the young to develop the

customary skills of fatherhood and motherhood, and to attain self-efficacy and career goals as defined by the traditional African customs. In the mentoring process, the mentor-mentee relationship allowed mentees to learn how to set and achieve goals, make decisions and solve problems. Researchers have shown that successful mentoring brings about a change in the person being mentored (Boreen et al, 2009; Dansky, 1996; Manstead & Van-Eckelen, 1998), resulting in personal and career transformation. Also, transformation may occur in both mentor and mentee. Transformation may occur in complex ways, including the creation of new ways of making meaning in circumstances and life events, and the alteration of individual patterns of thinking. In turn, the gaining of new understanding may result in the change of individual behaviors and practices.

The mentoring component in SLDI aims to provide an individual with the tools and experience that will promote their personal, career and psychosocial development. Mentoring in this program has extended the mentors' achievements to mentees which should increase mentee self-efficacy, professionalism and productivity. Western researchers on academic, career, and business mentoring have established that mentoring patterns further the synergistic relationship between mentor and mentee, and that modeled behavior eventually transforms the mentee (Ragins, 2001; Smith 2006; McCall, 1998; Hezlett, 2005; Rock & Garavan, 2006). Studying mentoring among Catholic sisters in Kenya is a feasible strategy to provide evidence on the effects of mentoring on these women and may, by extension, lead to new mentoring methods for women in corporate and not for profit institutions.

### **Reframing Organizations through Mentoring**

Personnel in organizations have invested in leadership development as a resource for maximizing productivity and improving performance in a vibrant society (McCall, 1998). In support of leadership development, Charan, Drotter and Noel (2001) asserted that quality leaders shift their focus from individual performance to leading others. Also, successful leaders encourage sustained skills training, mentoring and coaching in order to build meaningful leadership potential in their organizations, thereby increasing productivity (Hill, 2003; Ladyshevsky, 2007; Patterson, 2003). These kinds of leaders enable individual members of the workforce to become functional contributors, and motivate them to mentor and coach others in order to increase organizational outputs and enhance quality relationships that encourage altruism, humility, vision, trust and service.

The implications of mentoring, as practiced by the SLDI trainees, are three-fold: the trainees are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their workplace environment; they are empowered with expertise and experience as mentors who will work to practice new business styles and initiatives; and they are encouraged to remain connected in forums that promote networking and collaborative exchange of ideas. The participants are

commissioned to impart similar skills to their mentees. The SLDI model of leadership development provides facets that enhance participants' self-knowledge and self-efficacy and that promote achievement of career goals. In turn, participants pass on similar skills in order to promote best leadership practices in their communities and organizations.

Mentoring is a viable strategy to reframe organizations managed by women religious in Kenya. Reflecting on the theory presented in Bolman and Deal's (2003) *Reframing Organizations*, the globalization phenomenon would require revisualizations of organizations using a variety of perspectives, including the structural, political, human resource and symbolic frameworks. To effectively reframe organizations, quality leadership and management skills are imperative for current and upcoming leaders. Members of the workforce need to be equipped with knowledge, skills, and the ability to lead and to bring desired change in their organizations. In this light, the SLDI program is a reframing initiative. It is a program geared towards enabling Catholic sisters to recognize their place in leadership and envision ways to address immediate needs while also responding to complex societal needs and global changes. The mentoring concept, as applied in the SLDI program, aims to enhance participants' ability to transfer skills to the workforce in their respective organizations. To provide cross-cultural fertilization, experienced international (American) and local (African) instructors in leadership development were recruited to teach in the program.

### Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role and impact of mentoring as a strategy to propagate meaningful leadership competencies and transfer knowledge and skills to the organizations and communities managed by Catholic sisters in Kenya. I illustrate the best instructional practices used by both international (USA) and local (African) instructors to deliver instruction and to facilitate transfer of skills to the participants' workplaces.

### Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of innovation theory, as described by Rogers (1995), is applied to conceptualize the skills learned by the trainees and how they transfer these skills to their organizations as well as mentor their colleagues. Rogers (1995) defined diffusion as "a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 23). *Diffusion of innovation* describes how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. The model is helpful to ascertain leadership behaviors learned and mentored to the mentees by a consideration of the innovation, style of communication, and steps in decision making and practice. Following Rogers' framework, the SLDI program is an innovation to enable its participants to transfer leadership skills to improve service delivery and to expand their ministries. The diffusion of innovation model provides

five essential phases: (a) knowledge, (b) persuasion, (c) decision, (d) implementation and (e) confirmation. These phases are illustrated as demonstrated in the SLDI program.

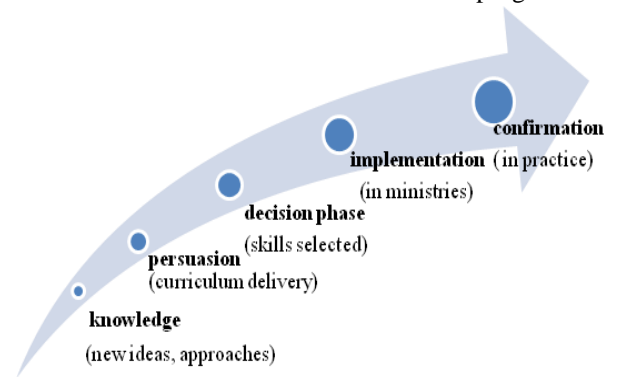


Figure 1: A model of Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovation* as applied to the SLDI Program.

### Design of the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative

In response to the leadership needs of the Catholic sisters in sub-Saharan Africa, the Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI) was envisaged and became a reality with the support of a \$2 million grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. The SLDI Phase I program commenced in 2007 by enrolling a total of 340 women religious from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and Nigeria. Another \$2 million grant was provided for Phase II (2010-2012). A total of 463 sisters participated in this phase. However, researchers in this study focused on Phase I participants. McCauley et al. (1998) defined leadership development as "strategies and activities that expand the collective capacity of an organization and its members to engage effectively in management roles and processes" (p. 2). Therefore, SLDI aims to strengthen and increase the leadership, financial and basic technology skills of women religious of Africa, so they can offer quality services and expand their ministries.

The outlined SLDI Program goals were: (a) ability to transfer the skills and knowledge needed for effective project and financial management, (b) encouragement of creative and effective leadership, (c) increase in abilities to identify and mobilize resources, (d) expanded knowledge of development issues that impact the socio-economic and political life of individuals and communities, (e) enhancement of skills in human relations, and (f) development of a strategic plan and plans to ensure sustainability of the projects (SLDI Program, Handbook, 2007). To achieve these goals, 10-week training was conducted to 340 women religious in five countries, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, and Nigeria; however, the focus of my study was in Kenya.

### Method

To determine the role and the impact of mentoring and best instructional strategy applied to facilitate the transfer of skills to the trainees' organizations, I employed qualitative case study

methodology drawing from empirical data collected in Kenya. A case study examines a single entity, phenomenon or social unit (Merriam, 2002). Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the mentors and by conducting site visit observations in Kenya. During the interviews, the interviewer became the main instrument because she directed the interview process (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Astuteness, then, is required in crafting the interview questions, in order to ascertain the credibility and dependability of the items.

Prior to the site visit in Kenya, a pilot study was conducted to determine the accuracy and consistency of the interview questions. After the analysis of the pilot study, six research questions were adopted to facilitate the interview process; they include: (a) How did the lessons on mentoring help identify resources in your work and ways to work with your mentees?; (b) What were difficulties or successes in mentoring?; (c) What was the lasting effect of the leadership training and mentoring in you and your mentee?; (d) "How would the skills you learned and mentored continue into the future?"; (e) "What instructional strategies were relevant for skills-transfer to your workplace?"; and (f) "What were the differences in instructional strategies applied by both American and African instructors?."

### **Participants**

A random sample of 12 women was selected from a group of 60 women religious in Kenya who were participants of the three-year SLDI program. A criterion of selection was that participants had to have completed the leadership program and had to be from a unique congregation (institute). In addition, only four participants were selected from each of the three SLDI tracks, which included finance, administration and project management. These women had the opportunity to learn and practice the knowledge and skills acquired from the SLDI program. They were in leadership positions, which enabled them to practice and mentor the workforce.

An e-mail containing a cover letter introducing the purpose of the study and inquiring about willingness to take part in the research was sent to sixty SLDI participants in Kenya. From all favorable replies, a random sample consisting of twelve individuals was selected using the alphabetical last name as a criterion of selection. Then, a consent letter was sent to the twelve participants guaranteeing confidentiality and optional withdrawal from the study at any time. Follow-up telephone calls were placed to schedule the interview time, venue and date.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The four themes that emerged include: (a) meaningful instructional strategies, (b) skills-mentored, (c) skills-transfer and capacity building, and (d) transformation and networking. Mentoring was cited as a beneficial strategy that allowed for skills transfer and practice.

### **Meaningful Instructional Strategies**

Participants explained that instructional strategies applied by instructors were relevant because they used similar strategies to mentor and conduct workshops to their colleagues. The strategies allowed them to reflect, internalize and remember the knowledge and skills in order to share with their co-workers.

Trainees described instructional strategies and materials that helped learn and transfer the skills to their workplaces. The instructional strategies cited as most feasible were categorized into three groups: (a) participatory interactive strategies, which included group discussion, lectures, questioning, case studies, and role play, (b) project-based strategies including action plans, hands-on activities, computer skills practices, peer mentoring and designing projects in groups, and (c) training materials for further exploration, including textbooks, Mp3 players, visual materials, and podcasts.

Trainees appraised the mixing of international (American) and local (Africa) instructors as a best strategy to broaden their leadership perspectives. They argued that American instructors provided leadership and mentoring examples from their culture, which were meaningful and relevant to the African work environment context. Similarly, African instructors drew examples from political, economic, cultural and religious issues facing Africa. They said they could resonate with the examples provided, and that they reflected on the concerns and issues facing their work environment. In turn, the trainees used similar strategies in conducting workshops or mentoring their colleagues. For example, case studies were cited as an essential tool for engaging trainees in reflective discussion. Priscilla, a school bursar, explained, "I still remember a case that dealt with financial mismanagement due to poor recording of transactions ... the individual in the case lost the job and had to pay the money ... it was a big lesson for me ... cases were good, we were able to think and analyze consequences of practical situation." Maria, a hospital financial administrator, noted, "in group discussion I learned listening, teambuilding skills and appreciation that other people are equally knowledgeable, and have something to contribute to the group ... my confidence was built up to realize that I do not have to be correct ... the most important thing is that I share my own perspective about an issue." Another trainee, Sophia, a bursar, said of group work:

We discussed and reported in the plenary about the topic in question, we gained confidence and ability to support our views in the class ... also working in groups enhanced teamwork and ability to involve colleagues ... my view to respect people for who they are was transformed ... I do not need to force my ideas as the only correct ones but involve others.

Giber, Carter, and Goldsmith (1999), during their investigation of the best practices in leadership development, conducted a survey of 50 companies engaged in leadership development. Findings showed that mentoring programs and action learning were reported to be the most successful efforts. Furthermore, researchers who examined the differences between formal and

informal mentoring indicated a significant difference between the two (Ragins & Cotton, 1999), with informal having more beneficial outcomes (Dansky, 1996). It was thought that informal mentoring would be a more viable strategy because of intergroup relations that existed among the women religious and the desire to bring change and promote competency in their ministries. In the process, the focus of a competent mentor or leader is on planning, assigning work, motivating and coaching others.

The goal of making training transferable is identifying the trainee transfer needs, providing interventions through action plans, mentoring, and matching the content to the trainee setting (Lim & Morris, 2006; Lim, 2000). In addition, researchers in leadership studies (Reinett, Foster & Sullivan, 2002; McCauley et al., 1998) asserted that knowledge acquisition is the first step in obtaining the necessary leadership skills. In this view, relevant instructional techniques that connect to the trainee transfer needs must be used. Conversely, knowledge by itself may not be sufficient to change an individual's leadership behavior and practices. Practice of skills helps the trainee to claim competence. Therefore, instructional expertise must be sought to provide the best leadership growth experience. Trainees acquired new ideas by learning the set courses; they selected and practiced the skills relevant to their ministry.

### Skills-Mentored

Salient skills mentored by participants to their colleagues' depicted issues and concerns trainees found to be imperative and needed to be addressed in their workplaces. All trainees identified relevant knowledge and skills that they acquired and mentored to their mentees and co-workers. The competencies mentored were similar to those embedded in the initial grant proposal and related to the competencies cited by trainees as essential, suggesting the success of mentoring in their communities. Table 1 illustrates some of the skills trainees mentored.

Table 1  
Percent of Sample Skills and Competencies Mentored as Reported by Trainee

Mentored skills	N	%
communication	11	92
mentoring	11	92
teambuilding	11	92
delegation	11	92
leadership styles	10	83
grant writing	10	83
financial management	10	83
time management	10	83
report writing	10	83
developing agenda	10	83
report writing	10	83
job description	10	83
needs assessment	10	83

motivation	10	83
conducting meetings	10	83
stress management	9	75
conflict resolution	9	75
bank reconciliation	9	75
SWOT analysis	9	75
budgetary control	9	75
property management	9	75
internal control	9	75
public speaking skills	9	75

When asked why they considered mentoring of particular skills relevant, Mariatta responded, "time management is vital in accomplishing goals and tasks ...most of my staff could waste time chatting on issues not related to our work... I conducted a time management workshop ... there is change." All 12 trainees (100%) concurred that their mentees were able to mentor others in their communities, thereby creating a cyclical, trickle-down effect in the ministries. Trainees commended the mentoring component. To some, it was totally a new idea. Though they were training each other on their jobs, they never referred to it as mentoring. Understanding the concept accelerated the training, as illustrated by Sophia's description on the effect of mentoring:

I mentored five people on communication, facilitation, teambuilding strategies, conducting meetings, delegation and facilitation skills, grant writing, and project planning ... my mentees chose what they wanted to be mentored from the notes and handouts I provided from the training ... it was so encouraging, we reflected on how we had been doing things ... the skills were important to the mentees as teachers, particularly to communicate to co-workers and establishing routines, teamwork, conducting meetings, drawing memos, and developing agenda.

Also, Jacinta elaborated:

I mentored eight staff members and I conducted three training sessions to the entire teaching and non-teaching staff at my school ... the topics I facilitated included job description, time management, motivation skills, conflict resolution, qualities of a leader, leadership styles, financial management and accountability and grant writing ... the skills were important because we had issues ... as a team in the school we needed to have a new direction in the school management.

### Skills-Transfer

The mentoring concept had an enormous lifelong and sustainable effect on the trainees and mentees and in their ministries. Interviewees reported having mentored far greater numbers than they had initially contemplated. Mentoring was conducted by all 12 interviewees (100%); combined, they mentored a total of 52 co-workers and conducted seminars to 180 co-workers and colleagues. Overall, mentoring had incalculable success. Additionally, interviewees incorporated

concepts of the knowledge and skills they acquired into their professional development or religious formation curriculum. The reasoning for building these skills into their development plans was the recognition that each individual contributes to her organization in a unique way, and needs to understand her leadership strengths and nurture them. Susan a school principal reported,

Everyone has a part in the five leadership styles ... it was important for members of staff to learn about grant writing, teambuilding, leadership styles ... I did not know about needs assessment before I came for this course; I felt that my mentees too needed to know too, and they were indeed happy, we are still working together.

Trainees expressed that mentoring was a new concept to them, though in some ways they were already mentoring; this being the case, they did not have difficulty in identifying their mentees, because they were colleagues with related job functions. Mercy, a healthcare administrator reported,

Mentoring was a new concept for most of us, though we did mentoring in our own world we did not call it that, we were required to conduct a formal mentoring process. We were not to mentor our friends, but a structured mentoring situation; this was very new to us.

Some participants organized seminars to teach their staff and community about better management of their institutions. Anne a social worker and a Program Officer said, "mentees too learned something new and implemented the skills ... they too began spreading the knowledge and skills ... indeed I would say the goals and objectives on mentoring were completely achieved."

Mentoring infused in the trainees, via instruction, a new way to nurture the skills they had acquired. In the SLDI program, the focus on mentoring enhanced the ability of trainees to pass on the skills that they acquired to their colleagues and co-workers. The relationship centered on increasing the mentee capacity in two ways: through career development and through psychosocial support. Several researchers have elucidated the mentoring concept as it pertains to career and psychosocial elements (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Baron & Morin, 2009). Career functions involve increasing mentees' exposure and capacity to carry out their duties efficiently, while psychosocial functions involve work performance, increasing self-efficacy, and providing friendship and personal and professional growth. The mentors' and mentees' relationships were beneficial to the dissemination of the desired leadership skills in their workplaces. Trainees practiced the skills so as to be able to transfer similar skills to their mentees. They sowed seeds of encouragement and self-confidence in their mentees and co-workers.

## **Transformation**

Transformation connotes a change or move from one form to another. Transformation takes two forms: internal or external. Internal transformation was evident in the participants' self-realization or a change in thinking patterns. This type of change can be evident in an individual's pattern of doing things. As a result, the effects are evident not only in the person but also in their behavior and organization, and in the way they approach and complete things. Lucy a healthcare worker reported, "the course gave me new ideas, it gave me confidence, I have the ability to do more and in a better way ... mentoring changed me, I had to learn and understand because I could not mentor what I did not know." Josephine, a school teacher, added, "I am a new leader with new perspectives." All the interviewees affirmed that mentoring is transforming their workplaces, because their colleagues were interested in learning and practicing the new skills. As a result, trainees conducted seminars because the demand for mentoring was high; as Beatrice a financial administrator explained, "I conducted seminars and workshops to all project accountants and community accountants, we have developed a financial manual on guidelines about banking, and financial expenditure plans for all the projects we supervise."

The mentors became more self-confident and pushed harder to understand the concept so that they could in turn share knowledge with others. The sisters who were mentored felt like part of the program, even though they had not attended it. Their sense of enrichment indicates that they had benefited from an opportunity to learn something, and so that was a plus.

The women religious mentored more than they had initially thought; they conducted seminars and workshops for their colleagues and workplaces, creating a very positive scenario with the knowledge and skills they acquired. Some mentored priests who they work with in parishes, so that they were on the same page in order to accomplish their administrative duties. As Consolata, a pastoral care coordinator, described, "the priest wanted to know what we learned in the training ... I explained to him ... I mentored him about delegation, teamwork, inventory, ethical leadership, financial management, report writing, grant writing, budgeting and balancing bank accounts."

Individual change is the beginning of an inner journey to self-discovery. Internal change would likely propel external change in workplaces. The participants reported self-discovery about their preferred leadership styles, articulating the ability to unlearn bad tendencies and taking on the meaningful leadership and managerial styles gathered from the training. The emphasis on change and new understanding of leadership concepts and styles created new understandings in the participants that were relevant for self-understanding: Irene, administrator of a counseling center, described;

The course gave me new ideas, it gave me confidence, I have the ability to do more and in a

better way because of the leadership knowledge ... I am a very strong introvert so I always thought leaders had to be extroverts ... now I know I do not have to become talkative to be a leader but just plan and do what I know to do as a leader.

Learning and mentoring leadership skills created transformation and change in the organizations. Susan, a trainee, elaborated:

I am a new leader with new perspectives ... I do believe that we left the training with a lot more confidence. I see leadership in a lot of different formats, not just the high-profile, so in that respect I think it has changed me and certainly I am changing my workplace.

Regarding networking, participants reported a change in their capacity to collaborate and work together. Beatrice reported about networking, "I gained in this course and something that will always remain with me is the capacity to collaborate and work together with the sisters and co-workers." Recognition of the practices that engender change is a step towards achieving the desired lasting effect. In addition, participants reported that they had developed a capacity for empowering other people to become self-reliant and to manage their lives independently. Regarding self-reliance, Consolata said, "self-reliance is the desire of every human being ... I am glad we have helped orphaned children and girls who become pregnant when they are not prepared to develop independent lifestyle." Also, Jacinta appraised how grant writing skills created a lasting effect in her organization: "I was able to source for funds to create projects ... construction of science laboratory and classrooms to provide education for poor children because endowing them with education is the beginning of transformation."

Learning about a financial manual was a turning point for the trainees in the financial track, as Mercy explained: "The manual is the guideline of what I do about banking, financial expenditure plans ... also for all other project accountants that I supervise ... this is a new change that is here to stay ... I have conducted seminars in the province training the projects and community bursars how to use it." The leadership competencies were described as a lasting effect, because they enable trainees to increase efficiency in organizational management.

Mentoring, as described and practiced by the trainees, had a huge impact among the trainees, their mentees, and their communities, and is a sustainable strategy to perpetuate knowledge, skills, career development and social support among co-workers. The goal of mentoring was to disseminate knowledge and skills to colleagues and co-workers, so that all could facilitate change and efficient service delivery. Trainees as mentors assumed the role of enablers, peer supporters,

motivators and encouragers to stimulate mentees' and co-workers' resourcefulness.

Changes affected might help eradicate poverty, enhance high-quality leadership in others, and broaden projects. Although building leadership abilities by training does not mean that good leadership will necessarily result in the environment, employing best policy and practice in leadership development is essential to its formation, and this study strives to describe the essential components.

### Conclusion

As illustrated from the experiences of the twelve women religious, mentoring had untold impacts on them and their colleagues. The mentoring process allowed for skills, transfer and dissemination of knowledge and skills to their organizations. This created transformations, strengthened work relationships as well as built teams. Mentorship is essential for leadership development and the speedy transfer of skills. A key goal of any leadership program is to effectively transfer knowledge and skills to the trainees. Caffarella (2002) defined transfer of learning as "effective application by the program participants of what they learned as a result of attending an education or training program" (p.204). Several factors contribute in the participants' transfer and practice of the skills they acquired in skills development programs, including the program design (Caffarella, 2002), the content of the program (Dorfman et al., 1997; Hezlett, 2005), the organizational set-up, and the community or social and environmental factors (Allen, 2003; Russon & Reinelt, 2004).

A variety of research studies in organizational change demonstrate that sometimes successful skills implementation proves impalpable or difficult to measure (Kotter, 1996; Senge, 1992; Ulrich, 1998). For example, according to an IBM (2006) study on CEO perception of change implementation, the description of success varied. Critical variables for leaders to fruitfully bring about desired change in organizations include a level of mentorship, communication, motivation, involvement of colleagues and team building (Gill, 2003; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Longnecker, 2004; Schnake, 2007). Also, cognitive processing during learning requires attention in order to capture and internalize behavior so as to model it in the future. Moreover, Moxley and O'Conner-Wilson (1998) suggest that an organization's leadership development program needs to focus on the effective operational skills that can be transferred in their organizational setting. So, leadership programs that fail to align the program with the real organizational environment can create difficulties for skills transfer and practice.

Researchers in this study revealed that mentoring was a success, supporting the findings suggested by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986; 1977), which holds that human behavior is learned through observation and modeling others (Bandura, 1986). As a result of observations, learning becomes a reciprocal relationship between an individual and

the environment. Bandura (1977) postulated that humans learn behavior through socialization (e.g. leadership, moral behavior) and model from their parents or leaders. Modeling here can be viewed as a transfer of skills, where mentoring in a participant's ministry may alter an individual's thought processes and behavior patterns. These findings suggest that exposure to leadership development could be a social experience modeled by the instructors, the leaders and now the women religious in the SLDI program. Significant variables are proposed in Social Learning Theory; that is, person, behavior and environment are all necessary for skills transfer. So incorporating a variety of approaches in a program can provide tangible experiences for successful mentorships.

Quality modeling results if the participant pays attention to the skill, is capable of remembering, has the ability to reproduce or motivate, and has the desire to demonstrate the behavior learned (Bandura, 1986). In addition, Wezlet and Welsh (2003) stress that individuals have a capacity to model and practice skills learned when the knowledge and skills resonate with their context; only then can they make a decision to implement and practice the skills. Bandura's theory indicates that leadership training can expose individuals to new knowledge and skills that elevate their consciousness for change. As a result, behavior change and self-efficacy may result and engender performance change. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the level of confidence that individuals develop in their ability to execute a certain direction in their actions or achieve specific outcomes. Studies show that a positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and performance (Manstead & Van-Eckelen, 1998; Zimmerman, et al, 1992). Self-efficacy is important for leaders to perform effectively in delegating duties and responsibilities, encouraging participation, mentoring, and coaching their colleagues. Also, self-efficacy can be based on an individual's ability to learn and practice the competencies acquired.

Despite similar leadership skills provided to SLDI trainee participants, the rate of innovation and adaptation may differ due to the level of individual enthusiasm, position in the workforce, work climate, ability to transfer skills, finances to support the change and the readiness of the workforce to practice the new strategies. Effective skills transfer and practice is the foundation of change, the pedestal of quality assessment on the impact, effectiveness and possible sustainability of a program. Conversely, it may be difficult to measure the level of change in a participant, and the degree to which the change has spread in her ministry. Anecdotes gathered from the interviewees and observations would provide significant information on the level of the participants' personal change and change in their ministries as observed by the instructors and program administrators.

Measurable and observable effects of the leadership and mentoring plans were cited. For example, sinking a borehole not only provided the greatly needed clean water for a community but also now saves time and energy for women and

girls who otherwise would be trekking for miles and for hours to fetch water. The social and economic benefits evident in the trainee ministries and communities are in themselves lasting effects of the program, such as changing the lifestyle for many through employment in grinding mills, schools, hospitals and bakeries, among other projects. In addition, these ministries and programs are essential investments for the community, and include an ambulance for health outreach programs, improved farming methods to increase productivity, and increasing skills development for youths in a garment and catering center. All these indicate lasting effects that bring change, improve life and encourage self-reliance in their communities.

Other researchers support the findings in my study, indicating that the model of training design, trainee characteristics and workplace are sound, since these are essential factors in the transfer of skills (Ford & Weissbeing, 1997; Grant & Simmons, 2008). Additionally, Martin (2010) established that workplace climate, peer support, and availability of resources are essential ingredients to skills transfer. Similarly, I found that behavioral changes following a single training occur; however, resources are necessary to ensure support, and practice is necessary to cement the skills into the job routine. Also, Hawley and Bernard (2005) suggested that networking with peers helps to clarify job-related ideas, and seeking peer advice and support eases skills transfer. In my study, networking among instructors and trainees was cited as helpful, because trainees continued to consult instructors via email to borrow ideas. Similarly, use of technology in training, such as computers and e-mail, provided networking tools that support the collective spirit among sub-Saharan African peoples. My findings revealed that mentoring offered encouragement, support, affirmation and friendship to the women religious participants of the SLDI program, their communities, and workplaces. Furthermore, mentoring was seen as an empowering, equipping, and connecting strategy, because alumni organizations have kept the fire ignited by the leadership program and alive in their participants' ministries.

## References

- Allen, T. D., & O'Brien, K. E. (2006). Formal mentoring programs and organizational attraction. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 17, 43-58.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. New York, NY: General Learning Press.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and actions*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Burke, L. A., & Baldwin, T. T. (1999). Workforce training transfer: A study of the effect of relapse prevention training and transfer climate. *Human Resource Management*, 38, 227-242.
- Burke, A. L., & Hutchins, M. H. (2008). A study of best practices in training transfer and proposed model of transfer. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 19(2), 107-128.
- Broad, M., & Newstrom, J. (1996). *Transfer of training*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.



- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2003). *Reframing Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boreen, J., Johnson, M., Niday., & Potts, J. (2009). *Mentoring beginning teachers: Guiding, reflecting and coaching*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Bullogh, A. M. (2008). Global factors affecting women's participation in leadership. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 70(05A), 1705.
- Caffarella, R. S. (2002). *Planning program for adult learners: A practical guide for educators, trainers, and staff developers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Caffer, P. N. (2006). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for promoting change: A case study in Tanzania. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67(11A), 4355.
- Charbonneau, D., Barling, J., & Kelloway, E. (2001). Transformational leadership sports performance: The mediating role of intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 31(7), 1521-1534.
- Charan, R. J., Drotter, S., & Noel, J. (2001). *The leadership pipeline: How to build the leadership powered Company*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Dansky, K. H. (1996). The effect of group mentoring on career outcomes. *Group & Organization Management*, 21, 5-21.
- Dorfman, P., Howell, J. Hibino, S., Lee, J., Tate, U., & Bautista, A. (1997). Leadership in Western and Asian countries: Commonalities and differences in effective leadership practices. *Leadership Quarterly*, 8, 233-274.
- Douglas, C. A. (2001). The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 23-46.
- Douglas, C. A. (1997). *Formal mentoring programs in organizations: An annotated bibliography*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Ford, J. K., & Weissbein, D. A. (1997). Transfer of training: An updated review and analysis. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 10(20), 22-41
- Gill, R. (2003). Change management or change leadership. *Journal of Change Management*, 3(4), 307-321.
- Gouws, A. (2008). Obstacles for women in leadership positions: The case of South Africa. *Signs* 34(1), 21-28.
- Gonzales-Rodriguez, Y. E. (1995). Mentoring to diversity: A multicultural approach. *New Direction for Adult and Continuing Education*, 66, 69-77.
- Grant, C. M., & Simmons, J. C. (2008). Narratives on experience of African-American women in the academy: Conceptualizing effective mentoring relationships of doctoral student and faculty. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21(5), 501-517.
- Hausma, C. (2003). Reluctant mentors and resistant protégés: Welcome to the "real" world of mentoring. *Adult Learning*, 14(1), 14-16.
- Hawley, J. D., & Bernard, J. K. (2005). Work environment characteristics and implications: A case study of the nuclear power industry. *Human Resource Development International*, 8(1), 65-80.
- Hezlett, S. A. (2005). Protégés' learning in mentoring relationships: A review of the literature and an exploratory case study. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7, 446-469.
- Hill, L. A. (2003). *Becoming a manager: How new managers master the challenges of leadership*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hill, M. A., & King, E. M. (1998). Women's education in developing countries: An overview. In E. M. King and M. A. Hill (Eds.), *Women's education in developing countries: Barriers, benefits and politics*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Hitt, M. A., & Ireland, D. A. (2002). The essence of strategic leadership: Managing human and social capital. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9, 3-14.
- Horvath, M., Wasko, L. E., & Bradley, J. L. (2008). The effect of formal mentoring program characteristics on organizational attraction. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 19, 323-349. doi: 10.1002/hrdq.1244
- Kotter, J. P. (2006). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of mentoring relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 608-625.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. San Francisco, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Ladyshevsky, R. K. (2007). A strategic approach for integrating theory to practice in leadership development. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 28(5), 426-443.
- Longnecker, C. O. (2004). Maximizing transfer of learning from management education programs: Best practices for retention and application. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 18(4), 4-6.
- Lucas, E. (2001). Social development strategies of non-governmental grassroots women's organizations in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social welfare*, 10, 185-193.
- Lim, H. D., & Morris, L. M. (2006). Influence of trainee characteristics, instructional satisfaction, and organizational climate on perceived learning and training transfer. *Human resource Development Quarterly*, 17(1), 85-115.
- Lim, H. D. (2000). Training design factors influencing transfer of training to the workplace within an international

- context. *Journal of Vocational Educational and training*, 52(2), 243-257.
- Martin, H. J. (2010). Workplace climate and peer support as determinants of training transfer. *Human Resource Quarterly*, 21(1), 87-104.
- Manstead, A. S. R., & Van-Eekelen, S. A. M. (1998). Distinguishing between perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy in the domain of academic intentions and behaviors. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28, 1375-1392
- McCall, M. W. (1998). *High Flyers: Developing the next generation of leaders*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.
- McCauley, C. D., & Douglas, C. A. (1998). *Management development through job experiences: An annotated bibliography*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- McCauley, C. D., Moxley, R. S. & Van Velsor, E. (Eds.). (1998). *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- McElroy, W. (2005). *West Africa and colonialism*. *Freedom Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.fff.org/freedom/fd0410d.asp>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.) (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mullen, E. (1994). Framing the mentorship relationship in as information exchange. *Human Resource Management Review*, 4, 257-281.
- Noe, R. (1988). An investigation of the determinants of successful assigned mentoring relationship. *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 457-479.
- Ragins, G., & Cotton, J. L. (1999). Mentor functions and outcomes: A comparison of males and females in formal and informal mentoring relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84, 529-550.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Salvaterra, M., Wakahiu, J., Farr, J., & Safino, G. (2009). Developing leaders among women religious in Africa. In A. Wiseman (Ed.), *Educational leadership: Global contexts and international comparisons International perspectives on Education and Society*, 11(pp. 245-271). London, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Schaller, J. (1996). Mentoring of women: transformation in adult religious education. *Religious Education*, 19(2), 160-169.
- Smith, B. (2005). The great hope of academic mentor programs: The unfulfilled promise. *African American Research Perspective*, 11(1), 169-181.
- Stromquist, N. P. (2002). *Education in a globalized world: The connectivity of economic power, technology and knowledge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sikazwe, E. J. (2006). Developing women's leadership through mentoring in rural communities of Zambia. *Masters Abstracts International*, 44(6), 2505.
- Robertson, D. L. C. (1996). Facilitating transformative learning: Attending to the dynamics of the educational helping relationships. *Adult Educational Quarterly*, 47(1), 41-53.
- Rock, A. D., & Garavan, T. N. (2006). Reconceptualizing developmental relationships. *Human Resource Development Review*, 5, 330-354.
- Russon, C., & Reinelt, C. (2004). The result of an evaluation scan of 55 leadership development programs. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 10(3), 105-107
- Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A. J., & Martinez-Pous, M. (1992). Self-motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29, 663-676.