

Paper Title:
African Leadership: Now and for the future

Moving from:

The Lament Narrative of “Monumental Leadership Failure”

To

A Narrative of Hope for “Visionary Change Leadership”

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Introduction and Overview

I want to flip the channel but I am inexorably drawn into watching the story unfolding. It is another dismal tale from Africa – something about another leader changing the constitution so that he can remain President. At the end, I watch with fascination as the news anchor delivers the message that the leader is an unpopular dictator – her expression remains flawlessly expressionless and deadpan as she transitions on. I wonder what she is actually thinking behind the deadpan mask as she hears herself broadcasting the narrative that is so commonplace, it's beginning to feel worn....

What is your story of African leadership? What is our collective story? How do these stories influence the leadership we have now? Is your current story of African leadership the same, or different than the story you'd like to see in the future?

Literature and research on African Leadership has focused on exposing the current pitfalls and perils of post-colonial African political leadership. The 'corruption', 'nepotism', 'resource grabbing' and 'violence' of African political leaders have been named and attributed to widespread armed conflicts, the economic demise and current status of underdevelopment across the continent. However, apart from Ayittey's (2005) look at the Cheetah generation – the young up and coming class of progressive African leaders – there has not been a lot of scholarly focus on the kind of African Leadership required to move the continent forward.

In this paper, I highlight the need for scholarship, dialogue and action to facilitate a new African Leadership required now and for the future. I use a narrative approach to review the literature, in order to uncover the existing stories of African Leadership. I define leadership based on definitions of leadership in African contexts, where leaders are defined as those who selflessly serve their communities for a greater good. Leadership in Africa is a group phenomenon in which leadership and followership is negotiated by the leader's ability to be embedded in and support followers in achieving their collective goals, thus significantly contributing to improving the life of the group, community, tribe or village. Followers will honour and respect leaders within formal hierarchical structures of kings, ruling councils and leaders, with respect and acceptance earned by the most effective servant leaders (Hotep, 2010; Masango, 2003). As Masango (2003) concludes:

In my view, an effective leader is a person who is always caring, supportive and not controlling. As he or she leads, threats diminish, and the leader becomes accepted as a member of the village/community. The leader is seen as a resource for the group and a co-worker in building up the community or village. In Africa, leadership was traditionally a function to be shared by all villagers or community members, rather than invested in one person. The whole aim of an effective or life-giving leader is to uplift the villagers/community in such a way that they progress. This will help people to express their own gifts within the village/community. As leaders share their gift of leadership, in return the people will honour them. As they continue to share in African religious ceremonies, an essential part of the way of life of each person, the villagers/community will join in celebration. (p. 315).

Thus, “traditionally, African Leadership is built on participation, responsibility and spiritual authority” (van der Colff, 2003, p.258).

In addition, Leadership in Africa means for me leadership that is inclusive of, but beyond the political class of post-colonial leaders. When I refer to African Leadership or Leadership in Africa, I mean leadership in every industry and from African grassroots leaders through leadership in and from the diaspora. Therefore, I take a meta-narrative view of leadership across the continent, particularly sub-Saharan Africa and its dispersed peoples. I do not include a review of individual country-specific leadership opportunities. The intent is to understand the narratives that inform the dialogue, research and praxis associated with African Leadership overall. I acknowledge, therefore, that there will be varying applications of the dialogue raised through this narrative review and analysis for the 55 recognised nation states of Africa. I start by further explaining the importance and significance of the orientations to the narrative approach for understanding African perspectives that I use. Next, I review the current dominant, as well as the possible alternative narratives inherent in a selection of the African Leadership literature. I follow that with a proposed narrative model, which occurs as guidelines for thinking about scholarship and praxis on African Leadership. The intent of this proposal is to start a dialogue, not make a declaration or provide a prescription of what must be. It provides guidelines for thinking and acting to create the leadership each of us needs and wants for Africa, now and into the future.

Why a Narrative Approach

Africa is diverse and complex with varying colonial heritages, and thousands of ethnic and linguistic groups (Nsamenang, 2003, 2005, 2007). However, it is possible from a universalist

orientation of human development to see a common thread within which unique variations and experiences can live and be uncovered. It is these common threads, from Africa's shared history of slavery, colonization, and ecological adaptations, which Nsamenang refers to in concluding that there is a common psychological frame of reference that represents a unique African worldview (Nsamenang, 2007, pp. 1-2). This aligns with theoretical perspectives to human development that assume underlying psychological processes are universal, while adaptations evident in behavior will be differentiated across cultures.

In African worldview, Nsamenang argued that African epistemologies and indigenous education favor what can be called holistic knowing, in which "knowledge is interwoven into a common tapestry...which is learned in a participatory curriculum" (Nsamenang, 2005, p. 2). He argued that this epistemology is a means through which the diverse ethnocultural realities of Africa can be integrated and can conceptually be understood as social ontogenesis, a worldview which situates personhood and identity within the social and the collective. The sociogenic worldview of Africans in general is confirmed by others. Through a summary of the work of Gabo Ntseane, African forms of learning and knowing are described as learning to live in the collective, such that being human represents being in community, inclusive of ancestors. As such, all forms of learning and knowledge systems are embedded in relational methods, such as participatory education, oral traditions and storytelling, and community ceremonies and rituals (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007).

As such, narrative is fundamental to African ways of knowing, healing traditions, governance, and expression of social change and justice. In attempting to understand the philosophies, ways of knowing, and being of Africans,

attention must be given to such factors that are expressive of African's ordinary forms of life, i.e., through their orature, their traditional forms of governance, their fictional literature, and their arts. These are all forms of the *narrative* [original author's emphasis] self-expression of Africans. (Bell, 2002, p. xi)

Bell (2002, p. 15) explained that Africans have a long tradition of story and narrative in literary and iconic forms, as a basis for critical reflection and expression and social change. Bell explained for example, that oral narrative practices, such as the rational dialogue of the village palaver, represent a philosophical orientation and reflect "a real critical effort on the part of [Africans] to resolve its common dilemmas...it is from such local, human narrative situations...that the narrative aspects of philosophy arise" (Bell, 2002, pp. 116-117). Bell further

showed that the tradition of engaging in issues of social change and justice carried forward into written narratives and literary fiction of Africans. Renowned African literary writers such as Wole Soyinka, Camara Laye, Ousmane Sembene, Chinua Achebe, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, all used African literature as a forum to raise consciousness of the African post-colonial context, problematize social norms and pre-colonial/traditional values and express African identities, sociocultural and moral contexts for change and social transformation (Bell, 2002, pp. 117-129). Other scholars have analyzed a variety of African narrative forms to show how Africans understand, negotiate and problematize issues of identity, agency, communication, social change and development (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Hai, 2009; Karp & Masolo, 2000).

Solinger et al. (2008) explain that narrative becomes a forum for social justice by giving voice and finding listeners, in order to break coercive silences and the isolation of the narrators. It is an optimistic perspective that the accurate telling of stories will highlight issues of social justice, promote human rights, and propel people and communities to activism in that direction. They summarize it this way:

Telling stories of indignity, tragedy, hope involves the teller in acts of transformation: experience and identity become mutable. The story can have a different ending from the one we already know. You can “hear” the story differently from me. We can compare. We can rewrite/re-enact/redraw and retell it again. The story becomes a way of remaking the world; being a storyteller in these contexts means being an activist. (Solinger, et al., 2008, p. 6)

In the narrative tradition, therefore, issues of social change and activism are highlighted through the metanarratives that are uncovered in analyzing narratives in their social context (Chase, 2005, p.668).

Therefore, a narrative review and understanding of African phenomena – in this case leadership – is crucial for understanding and development of the phenomena because of what I call contextual congruence. Contextual congruence is for me the principle that a phenomenon cannot be understood and developed outside of the form and context within which it emerges. In addition, not only does an African worldview favour collective narrative understandings, Couto (2004) summarizes the work of historical philosophers, social psychologists, sociologists and contemporary leadership scholars to show that narrative is significant for the study of leadership including leadership communication and leadership for social change. Dominant narratives told through ordinary stories are fundamental to human nature and give people access to their shared history, possible futures and therefore agency to make change. It is reasonable to conclude, given

this rich narrative tradition and history for both leadership theory and African understandings, that a narrative approach was ideal to understanding and uncovering the possible directions for African leadership going forward.

Narrative analysis and interpretation

The philosopher Alasdair McIntyre, as cited in Couto (2004), wrote that:

I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question “Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?” We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters—roles into which we have been drafted—and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. (pp. 3-4)

Couto (2004, p.4) builds on McIntyre to say the following:

The questions “What am I to do?” and “Of what story am I a part?” capture the essence of leadership—to take action, which may exceed one's authority, in the face of doubt. However, these questions miss the essence of leadership because they focus on the individual. Leaders ask and answer, “What are we to do?” Effective leadership asks implicitly or explicitly, “Of what story are we a part?” Leadership imparts an immediacy of the shared past of many people and a possible future that influences people to build a link of action between the shared past and a possible future.

Therefore, the approach I have taken to this paper is to first ask the questions: Of what leadership story are we a part of now? What leadership story do we want? What are we to do?

To respond to these questions, I have selectively reviewed African Leadership literature from the orientation of narrative analysis, informed by the interpretative reading into a whole narrative to understand the macro-zoom perspectives (Pamphilon, 1999; Riessman, 2008; Swart, 2013). A narrative lens and analysis is about moving beyond the surface of what is narrated to delve into the essence and underlying meaning of stories. A narrative interpretation allows inquirers to locate stories in context and look beyond what is told to understand the taken-for-granted beliefs, underlying intention and how, why and what purpose the content of stories serve (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Swart, 2013). Narrative analysis requires “close reading” and attention to the narrative choices made as well as the gaps and inconsistencies that point to the cultural, social, and other influences on those choices. Such reading also uncovers understandings of the dominant, alternative, and counter-narratives inherent in what is storied (Riessman, 2008, p. 11). The macro-zoom perspective is a narrative thematic approach that focuses on uncovering dominant discourses, narrative forms, and cohort

effects that are inherent in and frame narratives. Dominant discourses refer to sociocultural influences narrators refer to. Narrative forms refer to the type of story narrators signify and cohort effects refer to the subsequent influence of external and historical events on the groups of people affected (Pamphilon, 1999).

Furthermore, I especially use the lens of re-authoring narratives, which is informed by an African worldview, to conclude the analysis and respond to the question: What are we to do? As already shown, the intent of understanding narratives is to shift and re-author them (Swart, 2013). Understanding the leadership narratives we live in and by allows us to restore our futures by taking back our storytelling rights as African Leaders.

Locating the Paper...Locating Myself

In summary, I necessarily located this paper within a social constructive epistemology, with a narrative approach to understanding. My fundamental premise is that we – human beings and Africans as a collective – are storytelling beings. We make meaning of and live our lives consistent with the stories we tell. We embody our stories. I believe fundamentally that narrative disclosure and restoring of lives leads to transformation. I align with the evidence from the literatures in positive psychology, transformative learning, neuroscience, bio-psychosocial, narrative therapy and the constructive development arenas that attention to the positive, even in the most dire and traumatic circumstances leads to transformation. (e.g. Calhoun, Cann, & Tedeschi, 2010; Christopher, 2004; Cooperider, 2007; Meichenbaum, 2006; Mezirow, 2000; Rock & Schwartz, 2006; Swart, 2013; Taylor, Cranton & Associates, 2012; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader, 2010).

In keeping with these worldviews, I make explicit here my perspectives and standpoints to position myself in relation to this scholarly dialogue. The theoretical lens I bring to this study are inclusive of my background in human and organization development, leadership, organizational and social change, and transformational learning. I am on the boundaries and liminal spaces of many of the social identities related to the African Leadership dialogue. I am the daughter of Sierra Leonean parents who together held numerous leadership roles in African context including: university professor and scholar, diplomat, political leader, community activist, local council leadership, leadership of women's rights organizations and many more. I enjoyed the best and worst of my parents' careers. I have the example of a father who resigned his cabinet position in the ruling political Party in Sierra Leone in 1992 in personal protest, with

the hope of fighting for political and social change. He and the whole family lived in the consequences of that decision including living through his subsequent detention and then house arrest for just over two years, followed by his acquittal and exoneration of wrong-doing and corruption. He and my mother were both recipients of numerous national and international awards as a result of their exemplary leadership. I grew up and watched Sierra Leone go from democratic multi-party rule to autocratic rule to rebel warfare.

Given this background, I am sure the readers and audience will not be surprised by my joining this particular dialogue. I wish to disclose however, that this for me is part of my act of leadership in shifting and shaping a new future for the African Leadership narrative. I have stated elsewhere that I was tainted by my father's experiences, I was stoically uninterested in anything that had to do with social change, politics, leadership and advocacy and I was fatigued with my father's selfless giving to extended family and community that had meant so many sacrifices for us. However, my passion for leadership and a deep desire to contribute coupled with the tensions of observing missed leadership opportunities in and from the diaspora compel me to action. I am acutely aware that in the world of social change and transformation, however, it is collective leadership that is required. My hope through this paper is to activate and accelerate that collective leadership.

The Current Narrative: Of What Leadership Story are we a Part of Now?

Of what leadership story are we a part of now? It is likely no surprise that the popular metanarrative of African leadership in scholarship and in the media is a negative one, centred on the shortfalls of African political leadership. The evidence for this narrative in the context of post-colonial Africa is overwhelming. In short, Africa's political leadership class, who Ayittey (2005) calls the hippo generation have been accused of and have demonstrated a stoic adherence to a colonized mentality and Western policies inappropriate for African development, therefore colluding in the economic, sociocultural and political demise and instability of the continent (Ayittey, 2005; Memmi, 1965). The current narrative, as Ayittey (2005, p.402) puts it, is one of "monumental leadership failure." In this section, I will apply the macro-zoom lens to a selection of the most frequently occurring literature in scholarly databases and journals on 'African Leadership' to highlight the dominant discourses and narrative forms inherent in the Narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure. I demonstrate the narrative through the qualitative practice of

using thick descriptions; that is, providing actual excerpts that convey the context and discourse in as much detail as possible, to illustrate the discourse of the narrative (Ponterotto, 2006). I follow this with a discussion of the likely cohort effects and impacts resulting from the storyline of African leadership we are living in.

However, I wish to note that the Narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure has been uncovered, named and outlined by renowned and well-intentioned scholars, journalists and others, who from a critical perspective, have been able to shine a light on the current reality of African Leadership. Their breaking the silence has served an important role in the realm of transformation, in that without naming a current reality, a possible future can remain hidden. Their naming of the current realities of leadership in Africa is in itself an act of courageous leadership. In highlighting the framing of the current narrative, my intent is not to make those who have uncovered the narrative wrong, but to highlight the language and dominant discourses, narrative forms and cohort effects of living in the narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure. Indeed, many who have contributed to uncovering the narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure have also called for and indicated a new future is required. You will notice throughout that there are illustrative quotes from the same author appearing both in the rendering of the current narrative and the alternative narrative that already exists. My unique contribution therefore lies in bringing to our conscious awareness the impact of the current leadership narrative, in order to influence a shift in the overall metanarrative of African leadership.

A final caution, as Brookfield (2000, p.145) notes, is that “critical reflection’s focus on illuminating power relationships and hegemonic assumptions can be the death of the transformative impulse, inducing an energy-sapping, radical pessimism concerning the possibility of structural change.” This is the premise on which Freire (1970) describes the need for faith, hope and belief in mankind’s ability to change the situations that limit their freedom as premises for dialogical action: for hopelessness only brings with it the crippling dehumanizing effect that causes the oppressed to fatalistically accept their situation. The narrative re-authoring lens curbs this crippling effect. From a narrative perspective, the intent of acknowledging the current narratives that may not serve is to re-author the narrative to one that does.

Language of the narrative of “monumental leadership failure”

The following illustrative quotes provide thick descriptions of the storyline and language associated with the current discourse on African Leadership.

These first quotes show the descriptors and descriptions predominantly associated with African Leaders:

Africa has long been saddled with poor, even malevolent, leadership: predatory kleptocrats, military-installed autocrats, economic illiterates, and puffed-up posturers. By far the most gregarious examples come from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe -- countries that have been run into the ground despite their abundant natural resources. But these cases are by no means unrepresentative: by some measures, 90 percent of sub-Saharan African nations have experienced despotic rule in the last three decades. Such leaders use power as an end in itself, rather than for the public good; they are indifferent to the progress of their citizens (although anxious to receive their adulation); they are unswayed by reason and employ poisonous social or racial ideologies; and they are hypocrites, always shifting blame for their countries' distress. (Rotberg, 2004, p.1)

Corruption and state robbery is endemic in almost all countries on the continent and is a serious flaw in African leadership. In addition to corruption, kleptocracy and the unjustified amassing of state resources by greedy and irresponsible leaders have stunted development and heightened the level of impoverishment. According to an African Union study of 2002, corruption cost the continent up to 150 billion Dollars yearly (Blunt, 2002). (Alemazung, 2010)

The African political and socio-economic results associated with the current leadership are described in language illustrated in the following:

In 2006, the famous artist and song writer Simon Longuè Longuè released a song titled "50 ans au pouvoir c'est la maladie de l'afrique"/Fifty years in power, that's the African disease. As a de jure (Freedom House, 2007) and a de facto (events on the ground) "not-free" country, the Cameroon government slammed a ban on this song in the public and private media (Musa, 2008). The song text by Longuè Longuè lists amongst other problems, constitutional change, as it suited the power greed of African leaders, election rigging, embezzlement of state funds, succession by their offspring, and the use of state security forces to oppress the people as "la maladie de l'Afrique/the African disease" (Longue, 2006). All the diseases that Longue Longue criticized in his song which include amongst others: ethnic divisions, clientelism and institutionalized and widespread corruption, are not only common (also present in successful industrialised nations) in African political systems but have become a canker worm to political leadership in Africa, with overwhelmingly devastating. (Alemazung, 2011, p. 31)

The problems identified to be vitiating the quality and effectiveness of leadership in Africa include massive corruption, public mistrust of leaders due to a poor sense of accountability by these leasers, and a paralyzing cynicism among the people about government intentions and efforts. (Aka, 1997, p.220)

In general scholars acknowledge that many African leaders started with positive intent after gaining independence from colonialism. However, they state that Africa's leaders were either unable to institute policies that would further African development or the original Statesmen were forcibly removed from power, while subsequent well-intentioned leadership contenders do not hold up to their ideals as follows:

Post independent Africa produced statesmen ... Nevertheless, these leaders suffered serious set-backs in their countries due to their leadership approach and measures, many of which are blamed on their leadership flaws (inability): that is, lack of leadership skills in managing their new nations (Meredith, 2005: 8; Tordorff, 1993: 68, 129). Unskillful leadership by founding fathers of the new African nations and their inability to build strong institutions that would serve the people and not the leaders, continue to play a big role in the agony of today's Africa (Tordorff, 1993: 70)... However, and unfortunately for Africa most of its statesmen were killed or chased out of power before they realized the "common good" visions for their countries. Instead, the caliber of sophists, kleptocrats and tyrants such as late Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, late Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, Jean Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic (CAR) and their counterparts who transformed their once independent multiparty states into centralized military or authoritarian states "flourished". These tyrants flourished through oppression, co-optation and the practice of sophism, turning the continent into one whose government was/is founded upon greed and the struggle over state wealth. (Almazung, 2011, pp. 35-36)

For Africa in particular, there was a certain urgency, even desperateness, to this crave for development. Thus, following independence, many "African leaders were determined to drag, push, bully, or borrow their new nations into the modern world. (Aka, 1997, p. 224)

At the risk of blatant generalisation, African leaders seek office as patriots but soon upon assuming the mantle of leadership, cocoon themselves in ethnic cabals, abhorring technocrats, and not minding competence. And even when they succeed in recruiting technocrats to serve in their regimes, they all including the most idealistic of them balk under the weight and pressure of corruption and in their smear, join the powers to lord it over the people, in compromise of all the ideals for which they were known. ("Wither African Leadership, 2013, p.2)

The narrative of failed African states and leaders is also attributed to external historical causes, related to Africa's pre-independence history of slavery and colonialism:

... European countries have continued their systems of dominating and exploiting African peoples through the forms of leadership they created for Africa. As V. G. Kiernan (1982: 230) puts, "There are, after all, good reasons for prying into the past with the historian's telescope, and trying to see more clearly what happened, instead of being content with legend or fantasy. Of all reasons for an interest in the colonial wars [and terrorism] of modern times the best is that they are still going on, openly and disguised." Despite the

fact that most African peoples have achieved flag independence since the mid-twenty century, almost all Africans are still exposed to many forms of violence, absolute poverty, and disease. We cannot critically understand all these problems without fully and critically understanding the impacts of racial slavery and European colonial terrorism and war on various African peoples. Almost all of the African leaders of neocolonial states have followed the footsteps of their mentors, and they have engaged in dictatorship, violence, theft and robbery of the public resources; another predicament is “a soldiery trained by the foreigner, dragons’ teeth with harvest of wars and army coups” (K. G. Kiernan 1985: 227). (Jalata, 2013)

Based on this history, Alemazung (2010), corroborated with scholarship of others, documents the story of African leaders’ role in ongoing neocolonialism, furthered in the context of cold war politics:

Post-colonial colonialism: that is, the political and economic relationship between post-colonial Africa and the West have the same underpinnings and meet the same objective like the relationship of the colonial period: which was based on absolute control over Africa and its human and material resources and the nourishment Western industries and economic with Africa’s produce and markets. The exploitative and asymmetric character of this relationship has far reaching effects which weighs down the development on the continent negatively. (p.63)

However, colonialism could not be completely blame for “creating” multi-ethnic states in Africa, but instead, for encouraging hatred based upon ethnic differences and for forging differences amongst African peoples and nations in order to facilitate its rule, thereby destroying the foundation for potential state building in Africa (see Nnoli 2000). Unfortunately for the African people, post-colonial governments continued with the manipulation and disintegration of ethnic identities and groups. This placed the ruling elites and the state at the centre of the complexities and dimensions of the ethnic rivalry phenomenon on the continent (see Nnoli 2000)... The ruling structure, which was based on the control by a few, through oppression and the use of force, laid a basis for patron-client rulership after colonialism. Neo-patrimonial leadership as practiced in many African countries is an extension of the kind of autocratic and alien tyrant rule that the colonial master’s had initiated. Following the disruption of the African pre-colonial leadership form and the corresponding political culture, colonialism can be said to have set up structures and ruptured the dynamics and patterns which curtailed different and contradicting interethnic relations and interests. According to John Lonsdale (1986: 145) the instrument of political control and economic allocation in African states had been violently constructed by outsiders, that is, the colonizers. Consequently, the new “bandwagons” of rulers, as Lonsdale describe them, did not see the need for discipline and responsibility in the constitution of political power but simply applied the principle of rewarding and absorbing the recruitment of supporters and civil servants: neo-patrimonialism. (pp.66 – 67)

Ndirangu Mwaura (2005: 6) maintains that nothing in Africa changed after the colonizers left. According to Mwaura, the only change that occurred was the replacement of colonial

governors with colonial ambassadors. The administrative structures were maintained as well as the economic structures to preserve the flow of wealth from the continent to the West which began in the colonial time (Mwaura, 2005: 6). National leaders who took over after the colonizers left, Mwaura concludes, “were traitors, with a pretend and false patriotism”, who upheld a political network that exploited the African people to the benefit of the ruling elites and their western patrons. In the words of William Easterly (2006: 273), “colonial administration re-enforced autocracy in Africa” and neo-colonialism continued to sustain and consolidate tyrant autocratic rule, the result of which are bad governance and extremely selfish and cruel governors in the likes of Mobutu in Zaire, Idi Amin in Uganda and Bokassa in CAR (Meredith, 2005). (p.67)

The rulership practice of dictating to the African people by an alien rule established a culture of autocracy inherited by Africa’s founding “fathers” which today has become a cankerworm difficult to get rid of by many African nations. This leadership culture of coercion, oppression, arbitrary use of power including usurpation was inherited in the new states after independence. Rule by decree continued and colonial non-democratic rules officially became national laws in some of the new colonies as seen in the cases of Nigeria (Amadi, 2007) and French African colonies with *loi cadre* and censored media (Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, 1967; Eko, 2003). Colonialism also had a “discontinuity-effect” on the continent. Pre-colonial states which were peoplecentered with consensual and power-sharing leadership dimensions were interrupted and destroyed by colonialism (Herbst, 2000). By so doing, colonialism replaced the political culture of leadership for the people based on accountability, power-sharing and consensus with a culture of oppression and autocracy which has persisted since independence. (p.78)

The West worked through the support of dictators to sustain their economic control, prevent the influence of the Eastern bloc and maintain relations with African dictators, while the Eastern bloc continually fought to gain influence. In the end, the African people became victims of a political struggle among world powers with their elite leaders as accomplice and instruments of the game in the hands of world powers. The result was the upholding and consolidation of dictatorial regimes and the implantation of the culture of autocracy and repugnance towards opposing opinions and parties by the ruling nationalists’ autocrats. Nevertheless, support for dictators has continued in Africa in different forms even after the end of the cold war. Cold War or not, economic dominance and control continues on the part of the west and with democratically elected leaders who work towards the superordinate goal of the common good of his people, it is more likely that the setting the nations interest could “oppose” the economic benefits of the Western nations. (p75)

Alemazung (2010) further told the story of ongoing neocolonialism through illustrations of the ‘curse’ of foreign aid, resulting in a ‘looting’ of the continent:

...the good intentions of the West (de jure purpose of aid) have resulted to a de facto “looting” of the resources of the Africa people by the West through the accomplice of African leaders who analogically represent the corrupt police forces in their

countries... Besides the need for funds to build the new and crumbled nations that emerged after colonialism, the new nationalist governments were very often responsible for economic failures due to mismanagement and leadership flaws... The bad governance of tyrants and autocrats led to a continual economic decadence and increasing growth in poverty level until, “by the mid-1980s most Africans were as poor or poorer than they had been at the time of independence” (Meredith, 2005: 368). These bad governments, after crumbling their countries, turned to their excolonial masters and international organizations like the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank for funds. (p.72)

Just as oil and democracy makes a good government less likely—the “natural-resource curse”,—Easterly (2006: 135) writes that “more recent studies have found that there is also an ‘aid curse’”. Most often, corrupt leaders receiving huge aid revenues vigorously oppose democracy to prevent more equal distribution of aid resources—the “aid curse” effect (Easterly, 2006: 135). According to Steve Knack of the World Bank, increased aid “worsens bureaucratic quality and leads to violation of the rule of law with more impunity and to more corruption” (as quoted by Easterly 2006: 136). While Western nations continue to support tyrants and dictators in Africa, because their leadership does not pose any threat to the resource and commodity base economy of Africa which supplies the Western world and their markets, Easterly, concludes that “bad governments attract aid providers just as sinners attract evangelists”, thus if one carries out a thorough control, it is certain that, “donors make government worse”.(p.73)

According to Bates (1999: 88), if these governments were forced to borrow funds at home, they would be ready to grant concession too at home, but torn between begging from their citizens and begging from abroad, they settle for the latter. By so doing they bypass the people and thus avoid any political debate between them and their citizens. As noted by Stephen Brown (2005), when autocratic leaders are faced with conditioned aid they simply carry out minimum reforms that would enable them retain the aid quota they receive. (Pp.76-77)

Ayittey (2005) had similarly chronicled the foreign aid dependence story:

At the next crisis, African leaders mount their high horses and appeal incessantly to the international community to save the continent, globe trotting with a bowl in their hands, begging, begging for aid. They cannot see that Africa’s begging bowl is punched with holes. What comes in as foreign aid and investment ultimately leaks out. Total foreign aid and investment into Africa from all sources amounts to \$18 billion annually. But capital flight out of Africa exceeds \$20 billion annually. Destructive wars cost more than \$10 billion annually in weapon purchases, damage to infrastructure, and social carnage. According to a UN estimate, in 1991 alone, more than \$200 billion in capital was siphoned out of Africa by the ruling gangsters and briefcase bandits... Note that this amount was more than half of Africa’s foreign debt of \$320 billion. (Ayittey, 2005, p. 49)

It is notable that even a western response to Africa's foreign aid dependence, even though it was written to question the allocation of aid, was titled: "Shame on African Leadership" (Gwyther, 2006).

Alemazung (2011, p.31) acknowledged that all the issues covered here have also happened elsewhere, but that the African situation remains stuck.

As the political writings of John Locke after the 1688 Glorious Revolution in England and sub-sequent revolutions in Europe suggest, tyrant and selfish leadership is primordial in all societies including Africa. However, Western politics learning from the negative experience of tyrant leadership were able to establish constitutionalism founded upon political arrangements and institutional orders that could curb man's greed and abuse of power, thereby directing leadership toward serving the common good. Unfortunately, this process of "steering leadership" toward serving the common good has not been successful in Africa. The result is political tyranny, selfish and abusive leadership in excessive forms which are peculiar and persistent in Africa.

The contemporary narrative of Africa and her leaders in the context of globalization isn't much more uplifting as scholars point to the ongoing vulnerability of the continent in the world economic system:

On the whole, the poor showing of Africa in the global economy is a result of the ongoing processes of globalisation (Larsen and Fold, 2008:9). Ki-Zerbo (2007:4) laments the situation of the African continent but argues that if Africa is in crisis, it is simply part of a world crisis to which the continent is structurally subjected sometimes with the complicity of its leaders. Several sporadic attempts have been made to reverse the trend of things but these have been far too little and from a disjointed perspective. What Africa need in this global age is to take a bold step forward by uniting all the economies and leadership for common good? Kah (2012)

Africa is the most vulnerable and the ultimate frontier of wealth to continue empowering white supremacy in the world. The current crop of Africa's corrupt, cowardly and compliant leaders are working against their own self-interests and have almost sealed the deal for Africa's conquest by foreigners. (Zulu, 2013)

The storyline of leadership in Africa, as outlined here, is clearly one dominated by the discourse of African "leadership flaws and fallibilities," (Alemazung, 2011), colonial and neocolonial domination, aid dependency and generally a vulnerable Africa at the mercy of her leaders and any self-interested third parties. The overall narrative form is one of despondency and victimhood – a lament narrative. The narrative of African leadership is characterized by themes of kleptocracy, corruption and theft, autocracy and violence -- a disease and cankerworm narrative. I cannot and will not argue with the reasons for the development of these discourses

and narratives. I ask however from a stance of humble inquiry: what is the impact of this narrative that we, the current cohort of Africans are all a part of? What purpose do these narratives continue to serve? Who benefits? Whose voices are privileged when it comes to this narrative?

As stated earlier, the impact of unveiling dominant structures and narratives can be an energy-sapping, radical pessimism filled with hopelessness. As a negative dominant narrative persists, the experience it leaves of being stuck (Swart, 2013). The portrait of African leadership painted through the literature leaves me drained...in my mind's eye, the descriptors leave me with a predator-like, animalistic image of our leaders – in effect dehumanizing them. The other impact for me is the automatic human response to that which is presented as a threat. As evidence from neuroscience shows, we, human beings, respond physiologically to a social threat in the same way as a physical threat (Rock, 2008). Since the narrative of Africa's leaders represents both threats, the natural reaction is fight or flight. For those that fly, the vicious cycle continues – African leaders can continue on with no impetus to respond any differently. The narrative in fact excuses them from agency, by holding explanatory power for their behaviours. For those who fight, the position taken is oppositional, in effect warfare, and therefore a matching of the measure meted out. The only passionate and emotional response possible is anger. As Ayittey (2005, pp. 404 - 405) acknowledged: "The leadership in Africa is a despicable disgrace to black people. I won't back down from these "harsh words" because I am angry—very angry—and I am not alone in feeling this way." As a native Sierra Leonean, when I think of Charles Taylor and all the havoc that resulted under his rebel leadership, I too, feel anger rise. There is a time and place for passionate, righteous anger.

I believe however, that in the life cycle of social change and development, the initial points of pain and passion that fuel the need to name and uncover oppressive structures are needed, but become counterproductive at a tipping point where transformation and development are possible. I therefore believe that the road to transformation lies in moving away from anger to shared understanding, compassion and love. We all, contribute to, participate in, and in some form exemplify the current leadership narrative because in African context, indeed in any context, leadership cannot be separated from followership as we each take on either or both roles in different situations. Anger puts us in opposition to the role of leaders. Shifting the narrative and therefore the outcomes of leadership requires restoring the relationships, and connections

required to lead and to follow in service of transformation. I cannot see you, understand you and have the opportunity to transform our shared context, unless I can relate to you – this requires humanizing the ‘other.’ As we honour Nelson Mandela’s legacy here today, let us remember his example and call for unity that required relinquishing his own angers in favour of the greater call to unity, freedom and democracy.

The other impact of the African Leadership Lament, is that it reinforces the narrative of Africa as the dark and doomed continent with no future. The reasons for Africa’s problems are generally oversimplified, misunderstood and sensationalized outside African contexts, which creates a crippling and helpless effect, as well as desensitization in the global consciousness of Africa and African problems (Hawkins, 2008; Shah, 2010). From my perspective, a major impact of this despondency narrative of Africa lies in what Chimamanda Adichie has called “The danger of a single story” of Africa (TED Talks, 2009). As is evident from the narrative re-authoring approach, disrupting dominant narratives requires unveiling alternative narratives and the multiple stories that already exist, and that are possible.

The Alternative & Possible Narrative: What Leadership Story do we want?

What leadership story do we want? A principle of change from the leadership and transformational change approach of appreciative leadership holds that whatever you want more of already exists. Inspiring people to change and action then requires moving from criticism to: illuminating what you want more of, including all actors in co-creating the future, and practicing integrity by modeling what you want more of and bringing “competing, conflicting, and/or contradicting forces into awareness and harmony through inquiry, dialogue, and collective reflection” (Whitney et al, 2010, p.163). Shifting the current narrative requires therefore, illuminating the best of what already exists in order to build on those positive narratives.

So, I ask: What leadership stories do we have on the African continent that takes us towards the common good? What African Leader – inclusive of historical, contemporary and everyday leaders – inspires you? What is the story of why they inspire you? What did they do and say? These questions are easily answered even in the context of the dominant narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure.” Exemplars of African Leaders have already been with us and have provided alternative narratives to the dominant one. These positive examples are acknowledged within the current scholarship and discourse, albeit within the context and framing of the failure and lament narrative, as illustrated with these quotes:

This depressing picture is brought into even sharper relief by the few but striking examples of effective African leadership in recent decades. These leaders stand out because of their strength of character, their adherence to the principles of participatory democracy, and their ability to overcome deep-rooted challenges. The government of Mozambique, for example, brought about economic growth rates of more than ten percent between 1996 and 2003, following the economic catastrophe wrought by that country's civil war (which ended in 1992). And in Kenya, President Mwai Kibaki has strengthened civil society, invested in education, and removed barriers to economic entrepreneurship instated during the repressive rule of Daniel arap Moi... The best example of good leadership in Africa is Botswana. Long before diamonds were discovered there, this former desert protectorate, which was neglected by the British under colonialism, demonstrated a knack for participatory democracy, integrity, tolerance, entrepreneurship, and the rule of law. The country has remained democratic in spirit as well as form continuously since its independence in 1966 -- an unmatched record in Africa. It has also defended human rights, encouraged civil liberties, and actively promoted its citizens' social and economic development. (Rotberg, 2004, p.1)

Post independent Africa produced statesmen such as Patrice Lumumba of Zaire, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso who arguably might have put their countries' interest at the top of their priority list. In their various countries and in the entire African continent, these men are considered as statesmen due to the "common-good" plan and efforts they had to build their nations for the good of their people ("The Assassination of Patrice Lumumba" by Ludo de Witte 2001; "Africa Unbound: Reflections of an African Statesman" by Alex, 1965; and "Thomas Sankara: L'espoir assassine" by Valere D. Some 1990). (Alemazung, 2011, p. 35)

Leaders like Ghana's Nkrumah and Guinea's Sekou Toure openly opposed neo-colonialism because of the nefarious economic and political outcome it had on African states. Peter Schwab (2004) thus classifies these two men as belonging to the radical group of African post-independent leaders (Alemazung, 2010, p.70)

If a leader were effective or good, he or she would be remembered, especially when other leaders are known for following wrong values. The community will continue teaching their children through conversation, proverbs and myths, as well as through practice. Hence leaders like King Moshoeshe, King Chaka, President Nyerere, President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, to name a few, are commemorated by African communities or villagers. (Masango, 2003, p.315)

The Encyclopedia of Leadership by Goethals, Sorenson and Burns (2004), also lists and acknowledges the following sub-Saharan African political and activist leaders: Haile Selassie, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Shaka Zulu and Desmond Tutu. The issue here isn't to question the merits of their leadership but to acknowledge that in spite of any controversies and contradictions surrounding them, they overall demonstrated and enacted leadership. As defined in African context, these leaders supported the advancement of their communities, countries and oftentimes, the continent and the world. The dominant discourse in these cases is of positivity, forward-movement and change leadership. So what made these leaders different and why is their narrative different? Rotberg (2004, pp. 1-2) provides some answers as illustrated in the following narrative:

What has enabled Botswana to succeed where so many other African nations have failed? Some observers point to the relative linguistic homogeneity of the country. But Somalia, which remains unstable despite a similar uniformity, shows that this factor is far from sufficient. ... It is Botswana's history of visionary leadership, especially in the years following independence that best explains its success. Sir Seretse Khama, Botswana's founding president, came from a family of Bamangwato chiefs well regarded for their benevolence and integrity. When Khama founded the Botswana Democratic Party in 1961 and led his country to independence, he was already dedicated to the principles of deliberative democracy and market economy that would allow his young country to

flourish. Modest, unostentatious as a leader, and a genuine believer in popular rule, Khama forged a participatory and law-respecting political culture that has endured under his successors, Sir Ketumile Masire and Festus Mogae... Although operating in very different circumstances, Mauritius' first leader, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, held to the same leadership codes as Khama. Ramgoolam gave Mauritius a robust democratic beginning, which has been sustained by a series of wise successors from different backgrounds and parties. Both Khama and Ramgoolam could have emulated many of their contemporaries by establishing strong, single-man, kleptocratic regimes. But they refused to do so.

Effective leadership has proved the decisive factor in South Africa, too: without Nelson Mandela's inclusive and visionary leadership, his adherence to the rule of law, his insistence on broadening the delivery of essential services, and his emphasis on moving from a command economy toward a market-driven one, South Africa would probably have emerged from apartheid as a far more fractured and autocratic state than it did.

Too few African leaders have followed the examples of Mandela, Khama, and Ramgoolam. Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, and Senegal are all showing promise. But in many other African countries, leaders have begun their presidential careers as democrats only to end up, a term or two later, as corrupt autocrats: Bakili Muluzi of Malawi, Moi of Kenya, and, most dramatically of all, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Other leaders, such as Sam Nujoma of Namibia and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, may be heading in the same direction.

The narrative form of this discourse is the Narrative of the Great Leader – the narrative of charismatic, idolized and often mythologized leadership status. It is a great starting point and shows that a different, alternative narrative to the dominant one is possible. As Aka (1997) urges, however, we need not only “rare talents” of charismatic and mythologized leaders for Africa now, but leadership from the grassroots to the global arenas, in every sector and industry across the public and private sectors (Aka, 1997). Shifting to enhance, enrich and expand the possibility of alternative narratives requires the choice and invitation to each of us to participate in creating our own narratives as well as our collective narrative and future. It has been pointed out that only 10% of Africa, if not less, has experienced effective leadership (Ayittey, 2005; Rotberg, 2004). This represents a 90% opportunity and possibility for a new narrative. The possibility is already taking hold. Whereas scholarship and popular media paint a despondent picture, a google search on “African Leadership” shows an encouraging trend. That trend is of search page after search page of a growing number of African leadership training programmes, institutes, academic programmes and academies, foundations, scholarships, leadership awards and so on. The current generation who wish for an alternative narrative are in action for change as Masango (2003, p.20) concludes:

In conclusion, African leaders have rediscovered the power of unity and dialogue, which has opened a door to the careful examination of African problems. Secondly, this discovery led to a further building of the need for an infrastructure of new leaders, through which older leaders may share their wisdom and pass on positive African values to the next generation. Good leadership in Africa always shares life with others...

Ayittey's Cheetah generation, the new generation of African leaders are being developed and are in action. They are the:

New breed of young African professionals ...they are not into the blame game. Blaming colonialists and imperialists does not cut it with them. These young Africans do not just sit there, expecting Western colonialists to come and fix Africa's problems. Nor do they call upon government to come and fix Africa's problems. Nor do they call upon government to do everything for them. (Ayittey, 2005, p.xxi)

Toward the leadership story we want.

So again, I ask: What leadership story do we want? The examples illustrated above have shown that there are alternative narratives to the dominant Narrative of Monumental Leadership Failure, already operating to move us forward. The literature again provides clear indications and guideposts of the leadership and forward movement being called for as follows:

Where ever we ultimately found ourselves after 50 years is a moot point. The issue I am trying to raise is that – at least and within their limitations, our Founding fathers took cognizance of the necessity of looking forward and tried to mobilize us to getting there. I am afraid, at a certain juncture of the past few decades; we seem to have lost that compass, with all its attendant implications. ...What are the valuable assets, particularly in terms of trajectories, that we should harness, deploy, sustain and carry forward? ...

With the independence of our countries it is pertinent to ask ourselves whether the Aims and Objectives articulated by the pioneers of our independence movements have been achieved or for that matter anywhere near fulfillment? With few exceptions, the answer is conspicuously NO. The struggle for freedom was not merely that of regime change. It was intended to ensure larger freedoms including the right to decide how we are governed, by whom and for what period. It was to remove injustice and ensure that the country's resources are utilized for the betterment of our peoples. It was to fight disease, ignorance and abject poverty...there are some soul searching questions which we as Africans need to ask ourselves. Why the continent which is one of the richest, if not the richest in terms of resources both human and material continues to have the poorest people? How do we overcome this blatant contradiction? How can we rationally explain the continued and in some cases escalating internal conflicts in some parts of our continent with attendant loss of millions of lives, human misery and destruction. How can we overcome the unenviable record of a Continent where millions of our people are forced to vote with their feet and thus languishing in refugee or internally displaced camps? How do we erase the image of a continent where corruption is considered endemic? (Salim, 2010, pp. 1 -2)

A conscience call for leadership for the people and not the self, seeking the common goal and not the personal goal must be the sole desire of Africa leaders if they mean good for their countries and if they want to share in the suffering of their people: which of course every leader must do. Thus leadership for the common good, personal leadership character of magnanimity is most needed now in Africa to ensure successful transitions and enforce functional and good governance, without which, international or no international “support,” Africa will continue to fail. (Alemazung, 2010, p. 80)

Now is the time for the new African leadership to rise above pettiness and individualism to build the Africa of today and tomorrow for their citizens... If these leaders fail to learn from the failure of their peers to unite the continent, then history would have repeated itself again and Africa will stagnate while other regions of the world make great leaps forward through united action... In a general sense, Africa must take its destiny into its hands and ensure economic and political autonomy in the face of all opposition as long as Africans know that this is the sure but hard way to success. Africans must take the lead in charting their future because no other people will do it for them. Experience since colonialism shows that this will never be done by other people except Africans who should be able to shun individualism for unity and survival of the continent. Integration as Bond (2002) recommends cannot be the only answer for Africa’s problems but unity will best serve their interest. African leaders should go beyond thinking afresh (Mkapa2005) to act afresh for its unit. (Kah 2012, pp.35-36)

With the new leadership that is emerging, we hope we will experience leaders who are sensitive to the needs of the people. We need leaders who will help Africa to become innovative. The only way African leaders can be effective is by addressing the problems that are affecting their followers. (Masango, 2003, p.314)

Until the present leadership become visionary like Nkrumah or even more visionary than him by uniting the continent and embarking on projects that can reverse the image of Africa, the continent is literally on its way to a slaughter house. The time to act is here and now. The leaders of giant of a continent need to surprise the world and, for decades, embarrass and baffle those who think that they have found a fool of a continent which they will drain dry. If no concerted action is taken now, posterity will have nothing to feed on because all the wealth and resources of the continent would have gone for good. (Kah, 2012)

This is a call for an overall metanarrative of Visionary Change Leadership with a focus on advancing the common good and collective advancement of African peoples. It is noteworthy, however, that in moving toward what we want, the exemplars of African leadership and alternative possibilities are positioned as counter-narratives, contrasted against the leadership examples and aspirations we *do not* want. This places what we do want in opposition to the dominant narrative, evidenced in descriptors of leadership exemplars as “radical” and “revolutionary” and the journey to change as one of resistance and struggle. I propose that

thinking, talking and writing about a new leadership narrative simply as an alternative and a possibility that is already there, and anchored in what we *do want*, generates the creative tension that propels to action. The example of the African Leadership Council struck in 2004 serves as an example that the intention and move to creative action do indeed already exist. Regardless of whether and how it has been implemented, this example shows creative forward moving actions are possible as shown below:

To build on the positive leadership examples, a select group of prominent past and present African leaders who met over the last year decided to confront the continent's pathology of poor leadership with deeds as well as words. At the conclusion of a series of private meetings (the final one of which was held in Mombasa, Kenya), they established the African Leadership Council, promulgated a Code of African Leadership with 23 commandments, issued a Mombasa Declaration promoting better leadership, and proposed a series of courses to train their political successors in the art of good government. Members of the council believe that absolute standards of leadership are both appropriate and attainable. Good leaders deliver security of the state and of the person, the rule of law, good education and health services, and a framework conducive to economic growth. They ensure effective arteries of commerce and enshrine personal and human freedoms. They empower civil society and protect the environmental commons. Crucially, good leaders also provide their citizens with a sense of belonging to a national enterprise. Conscious that Africa's poor are getting poorer and that good governance is essential for successful economic development, the council sees itself at the vanguard of fundamental reform in the continent. Its approach certainly goes far beyond the New Partnership for Africa's Development (nepad) and proposals for the African Union. The Code of African Leadership, for example, says in its first commandment that leaders should "offer a coherent vision of individual growth and national advancement with justice and dignity for all," implying that most leaders today do not. Other commandments demand that African leaders encourage "broad participation," adhere to the letter and spirit of their national constitutions (especially term limits), encourage dissent and disagreement, respect human rights and civil liberties, strengthen the rule of law, promote policies that eradicate poverty and improve the well-being of their citizens, ensure a strong code of ethics, refuse to use their offices for personal gain, oppose corruption, and bolster essential personal freedoms... The council is chaired by former President Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana and includes former Nigerian head of state General Yakubu Gowon, Vice President Moody Awori of Kenya, former Prime Minister Hage Geingob of Namibia, and a dozen other present and former prime ministers and cabinet ministers from Sierra Leone to Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. All are regarded throughout Africa as men of unusual personal probity and esteem and as accomplished proponents of good governance. The council intends to recruit additional members from the ranks of Africa's outstanding democratic leaders, Francophone and Anglophone, female and male. Together they will serve the continent by advising international organizations, individual countries, and donor agencies on how to improve leadership. The group stands ready to assist civil societies in countries undergoing serious leadership crises. It will also urge greedy national leaders to attack corrupt practices and

adhere to term limits (the current presidents of Gabon, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda, and Zambia, for example, have all had pangs of desire for illegal third terms). Next year, it expects to begin holding special seminars for cabinet ministers and others. The council's curriculum emphasizes constitutionalism, the rule of law, ethics, accountability, diversity, good fiscal management, coalition building, and the fundamentals of modern micro- and macroeconomics. Rotberg (2004, p. 3)

Footprints to Reauthoring the African Leadership Narrative: What are we to do?...

Some of our leaders in Africa including the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki have characterized the 21st Century as Africa's century. I believe that this is possible, achievable and most of all necessary. This should be our clarion call. The clarion of the new generation of young people who unlike in our times, has more privileges of global interconnectivity including advance communication technology, to use for fulfilling its generational mission. (Salim, 2010, p.3)

My proposal is my dream of amplifying the alternative narratives of Visionary Change Leadership in Africa, built on the exemplars that already exist. The invitation is for us to come alongside these alternative narratives and participate in them, and as we do, we will re-author not only African leadership, but also the story of the African continent. I see for the future, leaders of all generations, starting right where they are, to lead and to follow, taking creative action to improve their own lives and the lives of those around them. Through consistent, dedicated and collective leadership action, Africa is transformed. National and international political and other leaders are surprised by the transformation and drawn to find out how it happened.

They'll find that the footprints to getting there were really ways of thinking and a process model for change. Leaders everywhere were guided by some of what has been named that needs to be done, such as: governance and rule of law reforms, economic policy reforms, social and cultural development, education, agricultural development, private sector investment, grassroots and community development (Aka, 1997; Ayittey, 2005; Salim, 2010). However, they focused primarily on talking together about what they wanted and taking collective action to make it so. Scholars and other actors are guided into further research and praxis by the empirical evidence and knowledge systems of leadership in African which show: (1) leadership in Africa requires a focus on the values of the community, the empowerment and inclusion of followers, and followers' assuming active responsibility for change (April & Ephraim, 2006; Masango, 2003); (2) Leadership requires narrative constructive shifts such as from inaccessible to achievable, exclusion to inclusion, individualism/self-interest to community relating, dictating to connecting,

disengagement to engagement in local concerns, problems to possibilities. As a result, people act on the knowledge that anyone can be a leader, leadership begins with self-awareness, is relational and is in service to community (Bolden & Kirk, 2009); (3) Leaders take seriously the philosophies inherent in African's sociogenic ways of knowing, being and relating, and our irrevocable commitment to human interconnectedness. This is exemplified in the Southern African Bantu term 'Ubuntu': 'I am, because we are.' (April & Ephraim, 2006; Masango, 2003, Nsamenang, 2003, 2005, 2007; van der Colff, 2003). As a result, we restore relating to each other through respect and dignity, collectivism and solidarity, continuous integrated development, value sharing, leadership legitimacy and communal enterprises (van der Colff, 2003).

Against this backdrop, we re-authored the lament narrative of the narrative of "Monumental Leadership Failure" to one of "Visionary Change Leadership" by participating in and amplifying the alternative narratives that we want more of. We re-authored the African narrative of leadership by following in the footprints of our elders who have worked for the common good, to create and expand on:

Distributed, accountable leadership...in every sector, every industry...in and out of the diaspora

Indeed this is the number one issue. All those who lead, at whatever level BUT especially as National Leaders, must be held accountable and act in a manner, which makes them truly servants of the people ... It is significant to observe in this context that practical experience has already demonstrated that where there is a responsible, accountable and incorruptible leadership abiding by the principles of good governance, their countries have made enormous progress in socio-economic development. (Salim, 2010, p.3)

Dialogic action

Leaders everywhere seek out understanding of each other's perspectives and needs, understanding that desired futures are co-created. They actively assess the dominant leadership narratives to uncover and understand taken for granted beliefs that do not serve the common good, and chose to re-author alternate narratives. They engage in dialogue to ensure shared understanding before taking action. As Freire (1970) is clear to explain, conscientization (becoming critically aware of oppressive situations) requires action for it to hold any transformational power. They practice the elements of Freire's theory of dialogical cultural action including genuine cooperation, unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis. As research based on the lives of transformational leaders for social change, including Nelson

Mandela, has shown, the presence of a diverse community that involves mentors and a forum for reflective dialogue, seem to be the necessary conditions for commitment to social action and change (Daloz, 2000). We tell the story of how we came to be models of leadership in the world. We tell the story in oral and literary forms, so that our children know never to return to our leadership past and starting point.

Collective, collaborative action

Leaders everywhere in Africa, seek the interests of each other, their nations and the continent. Ubuntu applies internally as well as externally within and beyond the continent: As Kah (2012) puts it: “no single part of Africa can be safe, or free to develop fully and independently, while any part remains un-liberated.” The continent is viewed as united in purpose and collaboration and cooperation happens in a myriad of ways to account for the variety of complexities on the continent.

Alternative narratives for the vulnerable, underprivileged, underserved

Leaders everywhere on the continent are intentional about caring for the vulnerable in society, including women, children and the *atinga* or peasant majority (Ayittey, 2005). All agree with Salim (2010, p.4) that women, have a significant role to play:

The women of Africa have been the most resilient and dynamic force. They constitute more than 50% of the entire population. They have played a crucial role in the struggle for independence and liberation wars. In conflict situations they bear a disproportionate burden of suffering. They have played and continue to play a pivotal role in all facets of economic and social development. *But their full potential has yet to be utilized.* And their role in decision making continues to be, by and large, sadly marginal. Currently African countries are taking significant steps aimed at empowering women. This vital process needs to be encouraged and intensified. This powerful force, when properly empowered and allowed to make full use of their potential will unleash an irreversible movement towards the political, social and economic emancipation of the continent.

All are equally attentive to the needs and rights of children the elderly and the peasant majority.

Bridging all divides

Leaders everywhere in Africa speak, act and live from a place of unity. All have let go of ethnic and tribal prejudices and tensions and transformed all difference into platforms for unity. We promote equality for all regardless of ethnic and racial differences. We treat our diversities from a place of celebrating and honouring our differences. We resolve all conflict by approaching them with curiosity and inquiry with the intention of attaining shared understanding and moving forward. We have fulfilled on Nelson Mandela’s ideals and live in a ‘rainbow continent’ where

all are:...able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow [continent]...

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.

Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfill themselves. (Mandela, 1994, p.1)

Courage

African leaders everywhere agree with Maya Angelou that: “*Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.*” All have the courage to take action and make a difference, in service of others. All say ‘yes!’ when it is required. Everyone has the courage to lead...now.

Unity

We remember the wise words of a Sierra Leonean parable that says “when brothers fight, a stranger will inherit their father’s property”...we believe we CAN do this...together!

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