

The Aga Khan IV Authentic Transformational Leadership - A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This ethnographic case study is aimed to present an investigation of contemporary Authentic Transformational Leadership (ATL) displayed by The Aga Khan in context of his contribution towards developing a diasporic Muslim Community (his followers) as well other innumerable beneficiaries who have benefited through his various social development initiatives. The case study focuses specifically on the evidences of Authentic Transformational Leadership behaviors by analyzing various facets about The Aga Khan and the outcomes that can be experienced, observed and finally reported. In this case study, the term Authentic Transformational Leadership will be referred as ATL by the researchers.

Design/methodology/approach – This case study uses exploratory ethnographic approach that provides auto-ethnographic account based on experiences, participant observations, digital footprints, interview excerpts, speeches and document analysis. Exploratory research design helps the researchers to analyse and interpret different information gathered during investigations that includes unstructured as well as in-depth interviews, documentary evidences, observation of how people behave, and exploration of various phenomena (Dowlatshahi, 2010; Mansourian, 2008). Ethnography is used in the case study because it helps the researcher to explain and interpret information on culture of a social group (Holloway et al., 2010).

Perceived Findings – The case study aims to identify characteristics of Authentic Transformational Leadership (ALT) in order to enrich the existing knowledge of this particular Leadership Style. This study also demonstrates how Authentic Transformational Leadership (ALT) manifests itself in the context of social and community development through the lens of an authentic form of transformative leadership model. The case study touches upon the Aga Khan's numerous initiatives in health, education, housing and economic development as well as his commitment to improving quality of life through the strengthening of civil society institutions across the globe.

Originality/Value – In the current case, Authentic Transformational Leadership ATL model is discussed in relation to the social development sector, however these leadership characteristics are relevant across all fields and in all organizations. This case study may help the readers re-examine their strategies for community/ organizational development and also inspect their own roles within this model. This case study may also contribute towards re-evaluating and changing the current persisting perceptions about the Muslim community.

Keywords

Authentic Transformational Leadership, The Aga Khan, Social Sector, Community Development

Paper type - Ethnographic Case Study

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Introduction

The Aga Khan - IV

Authentic Transformational Leadership - A Case Study

If our animosities are born out of fear, then confident generosity is born out of hope. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.

— **Aga Khan IV**

Islam means peace, derived from the Arabic word - Salam, and the essence of Islam is submission to Allah as one true God. In recent times, the media associates and portrays Muslims and Islam community in particular with violence and fanaticism. Hence, it has been observed that the phenomena of 'Islamophobia' has taken deep-seated socio-political implication globally. The concept of Islamophobia is explained as unfounded fear, anger, hostility and prejudice towards Islam and Muslims. Due to this wide spread of Islamophobia, there exists preconception and bias about Muslim population among the general public.

Prejudice is considered to be a negative judgment, opinion, or attitude, that attributes to the existence and propagation of Islamophobia and is detrimental to a population's overall well-being.

Dr. Lee Huebner, Professor, The School of Media and Public Affairs, George Washington University, once narrated an incident that happened in his class, which was attended by highly enlightened students, but they were not aware who the famous Muslim religious leader is The Aga Khan and what his contribution towards humanity. The reasons that he attributed for the same was that generally media tend to focus on few selected sensational side of Islam or Muslim religion instead of their noble contributions towards community development by their spiritual leaders. The general perception about the Muslims, which has been mainly perpetuated by the media, is hatred, radical approach and violence which are not always right and cannot be justified. Sophie Kaplan (2016), research scholar in Political Communication section of George Washington University, explains that the general population are not yet fully aware that Muslim religion stand and

contribute many things to the overall development of communities. Instead, the general public is swayed by the selective media association of this particular community with terrorism and extremism across the world. In addition, Sophie Kaplan (2016) explains that many people are not aware that there is a sect called Ismaili Muslim under Islam and this section is guided by a famous spiritual leader, The Aga Khan. The Media is reluctant to recognize and publicise the contributions of The Aga Khan for the humanity as the chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), an organization that conceived and implemented various philanthropic programs worth of \$625 million all across the developing world.

The Aga Khan, the current 49th hereditary Imam, is a respected spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslim community (officially known as the Shi'a Imami Ismaili Muslims). The Ismaili's Muslim community consists of approximately 20 million members who dwell in various part of the world, predominantly in the countries such as Central and South Asia, Middle East, Africa, various parts of Europe and North America. This Ismaili community has unique values of self-reliance, unity, and a shared identity through spiritual allegiances to their religious leader (Imam). This community always submits to Shia Imami Ismaili interpretation of Islam under the able guidance of their Imam. During the spiritual guidance and able leadership of current Imam, The Aga Khan, the community establishes well defined institutional structure to foster social and economic development of people in various parts of the world. Moreover, The Aga Khan is instrumental to establish various social organizations and movements to cater different social needs of common citizens of the country irrespective of creed, colour and religion through schools, primary health care centers, hospitals, refugee as well as disaster camps.

Authentic Transformational Leadership

The effective and efficient leaders generally influence the thought process of their followers and they could influence economic, political and social fabric of communities (Lussier & Achua, 2007). Previous researchers reasonably established that transformational leadership encourage both performance and overall development of their followers (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio 1990). Bass (1985) explains that these 4 behaviors - 1) idealized influence (charisma), - 2) inspirational motivation, - 3) intellectual stimulation, and -4) individualized consideration are critical for transformational leader to achieve high level of performances. Moreover, transformational leaders are those people who can generate trust among their followers, command their respect, and motivate them to exceed their performances beyond expectation (Oguz (2010). There are two types of transformational leadership explained based on previous studies- 1) authentic transformational leadership (depending on ethical behaviour of the leaders) and 2) Pseudo transformational leadership (depending on unethical behaviour of the leaders) (Barling et al., 2008).

The authentic transformational leaders, exhibits integrity and serve the organization or community to their fullest

potential in order to achieve excellent performances. In addition, they exhibit high level of responsibility to the followers to the extent of their self-sacrifice in true altruistic sense. On the contrary, pseudo-transformational leaders do not have legitimate intentions and they are considered to be egoistic, detrimental to the overall development of people (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). The Authentic leadership is considered to have an over-arching concept that is inclusive of not only transformational leadership but also all forms of positive leadership (May et al., 2003).

Methodology

In the current study, the researchers have used qualitative research method to collect the data analyse and conclude inferences to the initial queries of a study. The qualitative research design is explained as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It comprises of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" Denzin and Lincoln (2008), (p.4)

The exploratory mini ethnographic case study approach has been adopted for the current study. The exploratory research is used because the case study is aimed to interpret information that have been gathered during the investigation through various methods such as unstructured as well as in-depth interviews, documentary evidences, speeches, anecdotes and analysis of secondary data (Dowlatshahi, 2010; Mansourian, 2008). A case study methodology is more suitable for the current study because of its requirements for holistic and in-depth investigation of facts and data which are secondary in nature (Feagin et al 1991). Moreover, the case study methods help the researchers to combine a wide range of information sources such as documentations, observation, interviews, digital foot prints, speeches and various anecdotes of a single individual (The Aga Khan) within a social and community developmental framework.

Objective

The objective of the current case study is to investigate the Aga Khan's leadership style and to understand the nuances of his Authentic Transformational Leadership (ATL) approach in the context of community and social development. Another objective is aimed at creating an awareness of how the spirit of Islam if practised in its real sense enables peace, harmony and growth. This case study is an attempt to apprise and provide evidence of the power of ATL as demonstrated by the Aga Khan to promote inclusive, pluralistic international community development initiatives through various institutions and programs to respond to the socio, political and economic needs of various people staying in the developing countries.

Limitations and Delimitations

The main limitation of the case study is generalization of the findings. Generality may be unclear from just this one case study and one cannot make causal inferences. The behaviour of this one unit of analysis may or may not reflect upon the

behaviours of other entities in similar positions or organizations.

Delimitations are constraints upon the study that are acknowledged in order to avoid misrepresentation. This case study is limited to discussing the leadership style of The Aga Khan and does not indulge or explore any area of his personal life or his spiritual discourses.

Sampling

Case studies are qualitative in nature and do not promise to keep up with the quantitative conventions of sampling. For the current case study, researchers used purposive convenience sampling, where the researchers have attempted to choose data and information relevant to the topic of this study from various sources.

Table 1: Unbundling the Components of Authentic Transformational Leadership

| Components of Transformational Leadership -Bass (2006) | |
|--|--|
| Idealized Influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instils pride in followers (charismatic) • Goes beyond self-interest for the greater good of the organization • Displays a sense of power and confidence • Communicates most important values and beliefs • Emphasis on collective mission |
| Inspirational Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates a compelling vision • Optimistic about the future • Talks about the goals to be achieved • Encourages team spirit and enthusiasm |
| Intellectual Stimulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks differing perspectives and invites discussions • Encourages non-traditional thinking • Re-examines critical assumptions • Suggests new ways of completing tasks / assignments |
| Individualized Consideration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes self-development • Treats team members as individuals • Understands differing needs , abilities and aspirations of the followers • Listens to their concerns |
| Personal Characteristics of Authentic Leaders - | |

| Northouse, 2017 | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Self-Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are true to themselves , genuine • Exercise self-regulation with mindfulness • Develop wareness of the values that drive their decisions • Demonstrate high moral standards, integrity, and honesty |
| Sense of Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of their objectives goals and direction • Passionate about their purpose |
| Relationships and Connectedness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate willingness to share their experiences and listen to others' experiences • Display keenness' to establish new relationships and nurture existing ones • Foster followers that are loyal and fully committed |
| Sensitive and Compassionate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate willingness to help and responsive towards the needs of others • Build Considerate relationship with multiple stakeholders, ethnic groups and communities |

The Aga Khan - Evidence of Authentic Transformational Leadership

1. A Statesman without a State

The current Imam of Ismaili Muslims community is His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV who is popularly known as “The Aga Khan”. The Ismaili’s Muslim community consist of approximately 20 million members who dwell in various part of the world, predominantly in the countries such as Central and South Asia, Middle East , Africa, various parts of Europe and North America. The Aga Khan has been described as a visionary, intellectual, modest, methodical, genuinely thoughtful, courteous, realistic and a wise humanitarian. The world also sees him as an excellent statesman, a humble and respected leader and a world figure. In an interview with the Aga Khan, Henri Weill from La Cohorte on 29 January 2019, asked; ‘Your Highness, you are a head of state, but a head of state without a State?’ to which the Aga Khan replied, ‘I am the Imam of an international community. As you know, there is no state that is totally Ismaili. The community is in South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, in Africa, and now in Europe, North America and Australia’.

In an article published in the Daily Monitor (Oct 18th 2017), Professor Bukenya mentions that The Aga Khan may not be the recognized as a territorial head of any state or any

Government, but he is considered not only to be the one who commands allegiance among millions of his strong followers but also a spiritual leader who institutionalized many philanthropic activities across various countries. The Aga Khan, is treated as a head of state due to his direct access to the prime ministers and presidents of various countries but he always upholds the ongoing tradition and culture of political neutrality (Daryoush Mohammad Poor 2014). Generally, in Islam, spiritual leaders interpret faith in line with existing time horizon and they are committed to help and enhance the quality of life of the community and society wherever they present. In line with tradition of Islamic spiritual leader, The Aga Khan has dedicated his life for the pressing matters of the developing countries and he repeatedly mentions that his actions are considered not to be charity or philanthropy. He strongly believes that helping poor is one of the integral parts of the Islamic faith that is considered to be time tested tradition of his community to improve the quality of life.

His Highness the Aga Khan was awarded the 'Padma Vibhushan' in 2015 for his contributions to social development in India. Some of recent prestigious awards and recognition bestowed on him are; Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, France (2018), Grand Cross of the Order of Liberty, Portugal (2017), Simon Fraser University, Canada (2018), Most Excellent Order of Pearl of Africa, University of British Columbia, Canada (2018), Honorary Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), Adrienne Clarkson Prize for Global Citizenship (2016), The Grandmaster, Uganda (2017), Honorary Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), Honorary Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), University of Calgary, Canada (2018), Champion for Global Change Award 2017, Key to the City of Sugar Land, USA (2018) and Asia Society's Game Changer Lifetime Achievement Award, USA (2017). The Aga Khan is one of the few individuals in the world who is respected globally.

2. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)

Being the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), His Highness The Aga Khan has committed to social development for the last 60 years (as mentioned in the official web site of Ismaili Muslim community - <https://the.ismaili>). AKDN is consortium of private, non-governmental agencies, international as well as non-denominational organization with a purpose of improving living conditions of people, creating economic opportunities for people and managing natural calamities across the developing countries. The list of AKDN's main social development agencies are - 1) The Aga Khan Health Services, 2) The Aga Khan Education Services, 3) The Aga Khan Academies, 4) The Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, 5) The Aga Khan Foundation, 6) The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat as well as two universities, 7) The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture coordinates AKDN's cultural activities, including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Historic Cities Programme, Aga Khan Music Initiative, Aga Khan Museum, and Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (at Harvard and MIT). Through these various arms, AKDN is committed to

develop unique strategy and plan to ensure high level of self-sufficiency and support to enhance the quality of life of people in various developing countries.

AKDN, under the guidance of The Aga Khan, realized that sustaining a positive long term change is multifaceted phenomenon that needs persistent efforts and requires consistent strategy to manage complex situation. His Highness the Aga Khan explained this in a speech in 2002 in Amsterdam that "Development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well". AKDN, in collaboration with partners, produce electricity required for 10 million people in various locations, create health care facilities for 5 million people, facilitate education of 2 million students in various stages of their studies, ensure food security program for around 8 million people in developing countries, support households to improve their economic security, conduct programs to cater the enhancement of quality of life. In addition, AKDN collaborates with various state governments in developing countries for investment in power generation units, industrial production facilities, tourism promotions activities in order to enhance overall life quality and create an eco-system for entrepreneurial development

It is to be noted that the beneficiaries of these programmes are not limited to the Ismaili's, but are inclusive of all local communities of the region. The Aga Khan is a strong believer and an ardent advocate to have optimum balance of faith and practical life - what his followers call Din (spiritual) and Dunya (material). According to The Aga Khan, interpreting the faith as part of his spiritual responsibilities and his strong commitment to ensure the quality of life and wellbeing of people are two sides of the same coin. He strongly believes that his action and engagement of AKDN should not be limited to only Ismaili community but ensures overall development of people in the countries where Ismaili community lives.

3. The Refugee Crisis and Humanitarian Assistance

Since 1999, The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been dynamic and proactively engaged in the developmental work in Syria especially in the critical areas such as health care system, education network, microfinance channels and cultural developmental initiatives. The work in Syria equipped AKDN to enter into humanitarian assistance at the time of crisis. Currently AKDN engages in humanitarian assistance in the areas such as agriculture support (farmers are given seed to plant, feed for cattle), clean water system in villages, entrepreneurial skills for young people to find additional income for their development. Speaking in London at the conference organised by the Government of the United Kingdom on supporting Syria in February 2016, His Highness the Aga Khan stated that the goal of the AKDN is "peace, stability and reconstruction". In his speech he mentioned, "Since the beginning of conflict in 2011, AKDN has committed US\$ 50 million towards these endeavours in Syria and is now promising to

increasing this investment to US\$ 200 million over the next four years.”

António Guterres (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) highlighted the efforts and role played by AKDN in Uganda refugee crisis during the tenure of Idi Amin regime, in the lecture that was delivered in 2014 in Ottawa (Global Centre for Pluralism’s 2014 Annual Pluralism Lecture). António Guterres recollected that how AKDN played a crucial role in finding new homes to resettle the families who were forced to flee from the country and come up with a credible refugee crisis plan. Moreover, he appreciated AKDN’s extra ordinary work to relocate and settle the refugees from Afghanistan in countries such as Canada

Through, Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS) program, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) is poised to handle emergency needs of global communities over the last 20 years. This agency now takes emergency actions when any country , irrespective whether their community lives or not, suffers from natural calamities such as tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, cyclones, avalanches and civil conflicts. In the past, the agency was in forefront to mobilise and support humanitarian operations in countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Syria, Tajikistan and USA. In India when the state of Kerala faced unprecedented flooding in August 2018, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) deployed its Disaster Assessment and Response Team (DART). AKAH’s teams then organized 51 tonnes of non-food relief material for Kerala.

4. Embracing Pluralism, Diversity and Building Bridges

The Aga Khan established ‘The Global Center for Pluralism’ in Ottawa in association with Canada Government as an independent charitable organization with a vision to create a world where human differences are appreciated and thriving of diverse societies are ensured . According to the Aga Khan, pluralism is not only just desirable but also is critical for peace and prosperity of the generations to come". The Global Center for Pluralism’ is constantly trying to understand the fundamentals of inclusion and exclusion globally, through research, education and continuous dialogue. In addition, the center believes that pluralist societies are not created as mere casualties of history but require constant investment and decision-making in cultural, economic, political and social areas. In May 2017, at opening ceremony of the Center in his speech, The Aga Khan emphasised that Diversity’ should not be a reason to close opportunities by putting up wall instead of exploring new avenues by opening new windows.

The Aga Khan considers the diversity is not a burden but a good thing to have. It is not a burden but a blessing. The Aga Khan has built six unique Ismaili Centers globally; in London, Lisbon, Dubai, Dushanbe, Burnaby, and Toronto. Each edifice is exceptional both in architectural elegance as

well as in functionality. Built by the top architects of the world, their design and function echoed humility mood, frame work for forward outlook, Space for intellectual interaction and an epicentre for communal harmony. The Ismaili Centres around the world always represent the core values that Ismaili communities stand for and they are designed to have integrated space for social or cultural gathering, avenues for intellectual reflections, places for spiritual contemplations so that communal co-existence among various communities can be achieved. Religionists of a non-denominational influence incline to be more flexible in their views on various religious matters and rulings. Since Ismaili Centres support to have mutual exchanges among diverse group of people from various communities and multiple faith, these centers are the places for individual spiritual quest for the Ismaili followers, as well as spaces for expansion of intellectual possibilities, nurturing an appreciation of pluralism, building bridges of friendship and collaboration.

4. Professionalizing Volunteerism and Ethics in Action

The concept of Time and Knowledge Nazrana (TKN) try to combine two strong Ismaili traditions and values – 1) Accept the Imam of the time as an unconditional Nazrana (gift)– 2) offer intellectual capacity and time of a person for Imam’s efforts to develop the Jamat, and other communities. The Nazrana offering is a tradition not only to remind the need for supporting human development activities but also to impact the quality of life for the less privileged.

The Aga Khan emphasised that structured volunteerism will strengthen the civil societies across the world during his golden jubilee address to the Parliament of Canada in 2014. Moreover, he tried to amplify the need for devoting time and knowledge of Nazrana for the coexistence of various communities in the same address (Parliament of Canada in 2014). According to The Aga Khan, Ismaili need not only contribute wealth but also time and knowledge for development of societies and co-existence of communities. Over the past years, a large number of volunteers (including the researcher who have been in service for 2 decades) have served with the AKDN institutions in diverse professional fields and sectors: some of these include health care, education, financial services, audit, information technology, human resources management, renewable energy, architecture, engineering, telecommunications, management consulting, media, mediation, arts and culture. The TKN volunteers created an impact not only to help build capacity but also to achieve best practice standards in AKDN and Jamati institutions. This unique engagement model could be viewed as ‘Professionalization of Volunteering Services’. These experiences have been a professionally enriching and described as personally satisfying by the global TKN volunteers.

The story of Khudododova Tursunmo, 73 years old women who lives in Tajikistan is interesting to note to amplify the voluntarism ethos of Ismaili community. Tursunmo, while she was intensely listening to The Aga Khan and his teaching on Nazrana, was pondering and wondering on

what she could do to her beloved Imam. Then she, a retired grand mother of five, realized that Ismail across the world have a great opportunity to pledge their time and knowledge to Imam (The Aga Khan) as Dimond Jubilee gift. At the end of the presentation, a sheet was passed around where murids (followers) indicated how many hours or days in a year they would like to pledge. Khudododova skimmed the page, her hazel eyes perplexed: "Why days?" she asked the presenter. "I give all my time for Nazrana. I offer my whole self." She made a promise to create 60 community-based savings groups to mark 60 years of Imam. As her Time & Knowledge Nazrana niyat, Khudododova pledged to establish 60 almosi (diamond in Tajik) GAJAs (Guruhi Amonati Jome Asos - self-help groups in Tajik) for women living in the rural areas of Gorno-Badakhshan. The groups were specifically targeted to the Ismaili women who had never joined any savings group before but had dreams to improve better life quality for their homes. By the end of the Jubilee Year, 2018, Khudododova Tursunmo's 60 newly established almosi savings groups brought together over 2,000 Ismaili women from Khorog, Shughnon, Rushan, and Roshtqal'a who collectively saved USD \$255,650 (over two million Somoni), and an additional \$5,000 for an emergency social fund. The inspiring success of this initiative encouraged the introduction of the GAJA model beyond Tajikistan, particularly in Russia.

The exhibition 'Ethics in Action', is a clear illustration that ethics is crucial value for Ismaili community and how ethics impact the life of both Ismaili's Muslim community as well other religious faith that are co-existing in the developing world. Integrating technology, the exhibition is supplemented by an app that allows visitors to explore projects and ethics in details using a smartphone. The content shares human-centred stories about the lives touched through various development projects. One such story comes from Jyothi in India, who was able to complete schooling with the help of the Aga Khan Foundation. Rather than staying at home, Jyothi now plans to serve her community by becoming a teacher and educating more children. A number of AKDN agencies are represented at the Ethics in Action exhibition, each sharing their own stories relaying the benefits delivered to people, while collectively uplifting the wellbeing of communities and societies across the world.

Soaring Aspirations restrained by Stark Realities

This research will be incomplete if there is no mention of some probable challenges faced by the Agakhan.

Targeting the Ismaili Community

Ismaili's are considered to be more liberal and reformists while interpreting Holy Quran in comparison with other sects of Islam. They are more committed to their tradition of pursuing knowledge and comply the strong ethos of tolerance by working with pluralistic societies to achieve a harmonious co-existence. There is no doubt that Ismaili's under the guidance of their beloved Imam continuously contemporise the interpretation of doctrines of Quran. Ismaili's fundamentally believe that it is their obligation to

understand Quranic doctrine in line with the current reality and to be more tolerant towards other communities. This is the stark difference of Ismaili's community from other Muslim sects that engage and promote extreme fundamentalist activities and violent politics that affect communal harmony and overall development of society. In 2015, as many as 45 Ismaili Shia Muslims were killed and others gravely injured when a bus was boarded by gunmen, opened fire in Karachi, Pakistan. In spite of this grave provocation, the Aga Khan maintained a calm approach and even issued a strong written statement to give the message that the Ismailis were peace loving universal community who lived in harmony with various religious groups in different countries across the world.

Implementing his Strategic Vision

Even though a lot has been achieved through the network, there are times when the strategic vision enunciated by the Aga Khan is not executed in the spirit it was articulated. At the meetings, excitement is high as the Board and the key executives share the plan in accordance to his strategic vision of the future. However many a times with each passing day the strategy implementation takes the path of least resistance whereby issues causing polarization and conflicts are side-stepped. Within the organization there are challenges related to tracking progress - sometimes due to lack of measurements and other times due to lack of operational leading indicators.

Governing Boards and Management Collide

Currently, the operations of AKDN spread across 30 countries in the globe and they manage more than 1000 various programs, some of them may in existence for more than 100 years, for the upliftment of various communities. In addition, AKDN network operates various organizations to coordinate these programs mainly in developing countries and engage more than 96,000 employees to manage these initiatives. In addition to their employees, AKDN also heavily depend on Ismaili volunteers because voluntarism is a strong tradition among Ismaili community to serve the initiatives of AKDN for implementation and maintenance of various projects across the world. It is important to note that all directors serve the organization on voluntary basis without any remuneration. In every country, AKDN operates with a set up having 8-12 directors who play a critical role of guiding the organization to function as per the country requirements. In addition, AKDN engages independent directors who are responsible to improve credibility of the organization, comply with government standards of working and mitigate the risk concerns in various operations. The CEO of the organization in each location or country is responsible for planning and day to day management of institutions along with monitoring the progress of various initiatives.

There are times when the governance and management are on collision course or transgress their boundaries. The reasons could be varied; the governing board members lack relevant knowledge and adequate expertise (appointments

based on nepotism and cronyism is a suspected reason), expertise in selection of relevant projects, non-respecting the boundaries of local government agreements, lack of expertise to assess the project feasibility, lack of information related to key issues to tackle and options to consider. Some management teams view the board as little more than a rubber stamp mandated by regulation and procedures. It is essential that the management and the board have clearly defined roles and established policies, procedures and a steady pace of communication. Educating both the board members and the management teams about their roles and responsibility should be included as a critical mandate for the HRD portfolio globally.

Conclusion

Despite the many challenges he faces, The Aga Khan has been an inspiring role model to his followers and to the world. A lifetime of almost 60 years spent in supporting quality education, promoting tolerance and empowering his followers and also the other communities globally. His idealized influence has been inspirational to his followers who have enthusiastically responded to his call of thinking beyond self-interest and working towards the greater good. Articulating a compelling vision of a positive pluralistic world he inspires followers and communities to be optimistic about the future. Professionalization of volunteerism is a unique approach for intellectual stimulation, understanding differing perspectives and a non-traditional innovative method of giving back to the society and communities globally. He is a well-respected global influencer but practices restraint and is politically neutral. Building bridges and collaborating with multiple stakeholders and agencies he has been continuously working towards improving quality of life through the strengthening of civil society institutions across the world.

Finally, to call attention to the values that drive the decisions of The Aga Khan which embody Authentic Transformational Leadership, reproduced are some excerpts of the speech given by The Aga Khan at the Samuel L. and Elizabeth Jodidi Lecture at Harvard University (2015). The Aga Khan said, "A passage from the Holy Quran that has been central to my life is addressed to the whole of humanity. It says: "Oh Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul and from it, created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women. At the very heart of the Islamic faith is a conviction that we are all born "of a single soul." We are "spread abroad" to be sure in all of our diversity, but we share, in a most profound sense, a common humanity". The Aga Khan exhibits the true essence of Authentic Transformational Leadership, an inspiring story of relentless courage, perseverance and the power of working together.

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