



Co-Leadership - What is it? And why do we need it?

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I. Co-leadership, what is it

1. It is a leadership that includes everyone. Otto Scharmer once said: "The problem with leadership today is that most people think of it as being made up of individuals, with one person at the top. But if we see leadership as the capacity of a system to co-sense and co-shape the future, then we realize that all leadership is distributed - it needs to include every one".

2. According to Paolo Giusta, an Italian scholar, collective leadership is a practical way to organize and manage the community by collaborating and dividing responsibilities. And yes, it implies the existence of a relationship of fraternal nature between people involved in the leadership process, a process by which people belonging to the group influence the other to reach a common goal. Which means, it requires mutual influence, trust, cohesion, creativity, synergy and team spirit. There are some preliminary works that need to be done before starting a collective leadership process.

II. Why is it necessary?

1. Today's world is a post capitalist era, a pandemic era, a beyond all borders' era. It's an era of connectivity and simultaneous transformation and information (Letizia De Torre). We are living in a world where it is impossible to close yourself in your own territory and reality. The global world is constituted by a process of interdependence of people and nations on a planetary scale (trade, business, studies, researches...) in such a way that everything that happens in any State of the world may have effects in any other location (we saw it with the pandemic and the war in Ukraine...). And this because in a globalized world a common destiny binds us and no one can save themselves alone (Prisca Maharavo).

Which means that the best government/leadership that we need nowadays is the one that allows the system to collectively devise a common social vision and act in co-responsibility whether it's environmental protection, the fight against disease and poverty, etc.. And that is what we call co-leadership and co-governance.

2. In Africa, we have the Ubuntu, we say it in different way, ujamaa, ubuntu, fihavanana but it means the same thing, a philosophy of coexistence that emphasizes collective actions and community commitment, shared leadership, participative leadership, co-governance



and collective leadership. In Africa we have it in our DNA. Actually, in the villages in Madagascar, we know that people are still living in this way, let's work together to rebuild our neighbors house after a flood or cyclone their house have been destroyed. In Africa, we also strongly believe that to raise a child we need a whole village not just the nuclear family. Which means, we have this in our blood, culture and history. And now, even in Europe, politicians like Letizia De Torre (Bio) and other scholars are starting to tell us that the idea of co-leadership and co-governance were born in the cities and villages. They are the fruits of good practice of some leaders. They are the result of their good governance and experiences in the field before becoming a topic of study in universities everywhere in the world like here in Together for a new Africa ect....

3. with co-leadership, together we can change what is written about African political leadership since our independence because what is written there is corruption, dictatorship, nepotism and Coup d'Etat or putsch instead we shall instill a culture of unity and consensus, that African ability to overcome individual differences in favor of shared or common interpretations of the best way to act. (Bernard Matolino) . A collective leadership that we have experienced in our village or community. In Madagascar for example, in those villages, "far from the State" as we call them, people organize themselves in such a way that they plant and harvest their plantation with all the people in the village and it is the same when it is coming to build houses or repair it. So Ubuntu or fihavanana in our culture is not mere feeling or good will, it is a commitment to live with and for the community. That's why today or this week we shall help you to plant your rice and next week we shall repair his roof etc... Let us all come back to those traditional values that made the greatness of our ancestors and apply them in our lives today, in politics, in how we handle our economy ect... Let us be clear, not everything that has been done by our ancestors in the past was right but if we are taking the good part of the past and today's European culture why can't we do the same and select the good part of our culture and customs inherited from our ancestors and apply it in our leadership?

So now the question can be: how can we instill fihavanana, ubuntu and ujama in our daily lives Prisca? We saw how Ujama ended up in Tanzania, it was interpreted as socialism by the world and some studies are discussing its efficiency, we also see how fihavanana is instrumentalized in Madagascar by your own family or by the politics, so can we really instill the co-leadership in our politics and economy nowadays taking inspiration from Ubuntu and culture of unity?

Let's hear what the other panelists are suggesting to us. How can we practice co-leadership
Alex , J.J and Cristina?

