Rethinking, Redefining and Reinventing Leadership in the Modern Society: The Role of Ethical Leadership in Fostering Future Leaders in Sustainable Development

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Abstract
In the current world of modernity and globalization, as in the past, leadership remains an imperative ingredient at all levels of human life and stability of our societies. In this time of historic transition in our society we urgently need an ethical leadership that, while constantly and closely attuned to the rapidly changing pulse of human ventures and affairs, can project a comprehensive, coherent, and compelling vision of human society, communicate that vision convincingly to the whole world, foster its implementation through holistic and cooperative endeavor, and make and follow through on the hard decisions that will be bound to ensue. The quality of leadership we engender – at the grass-roots level, nationally, and globally, – will determine the kind of society we live in, and the state of the world that future generations will inherit. By embracing, rethinking, redefining and reinventing ethical leadership into the principles of sustainability as an expression of the shared common good; individuals, communities and organizations involved in leading ventures will be able to share their values and philosophies towards profitable development and sustainability, thus making our society.
Keywords: Rethinking Ethical Leadership, Sustainable development, Transitional society

1.0 Introduction

At this moment in the history of modernity, globalization and technology transfer of the 21st century, humanity is facing a number of shared challenges to our various ways of life. Challenges such as climate change, widespread poverty and social injustice and democracy continue to affect all people directly or indirectly. Given this, the urgent need for leaders who can address these collective challenges and facilitate our transition to sustainable development and lifestyle is readily apparent. These new leaders, required by the urgent necessity to promote sustainable lifestyles, are known as sustainable ethical leaders.

No longer are the models of traditional leaders adequate for the shared common good and interconnected challenges that affect our increasingly global community. Transitioning to sustainability requires a continuity of deepening direction over time," where the leader leaves behind successors "who can go even further" (Fullan, 2005). The holistic actions and long-term planning essential to promoting sustainability and the common good, do not usually concern the majority of those who follow the traditional leadership model. In fact, it has been recognized that strongly charismatic, traditional leaders are often linked negatively towards sustainability (Collins as cited in Fullan, 2005). These conventional leaders generally enact changes as short-term solutions to immediate problems and do not assiduously seek answers to the challenges and problems regarding sustainability or sustainable development. Sustainability leaders, however, are dedicated to long-term prosperity and survivability (Trevino and Nelson, 2007). They recognize that sustainable development is essential because it "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Vardi and Weitz, 2004).

It is becoming increasingly more apparent that "Today's society is faced with multiple, interconnected problems, such as climate change and significant ecosystem degradation, but it also has the unique opportunity to design and create sustainable futures"(Timmer, Creech & Buckler, 2008). These challenges necessitate the development of capable, responsible and effective leadership since leaders are crucial to forming and implementing effective reforms (Fullan, 2005).

1.2 Problem Statement of this paper

In recent years, corporate sustainability has gathered momentum in boardrooms across the country through a convergence of pressures from employees, investors, customers and citizens, governments and non-governmental organizations. Expectations from these stakeholders shaped by current and future environmental and social forces such as climate change, the effects of pollution on public health, water availability, scarce energy resources, social inequities and eroding trust in institutions, are forcing organizations to take a different, more sustainable approach to doing business. The main purpose of this paper therefore is to present key vital components of sustainable ethical leadership.

2.0 Literature Review

Leadership is a mutable quality which needs to change as the context demands, but there are a few consistent characteristics or skill sets that successful leaders frequently possess. The following section presents the main elements that build an ethically rethought leadership for sustainable development.

2.1 Fundamental leadership skills and the traditional leadership model

Effective leadership requires the ability to inspire shared visions and motivate people to work toward realizing them (Sustainability Leadership Institute, n.d.). Sharing their vision and ideas effectively and persuasively allows leaders to gain support and to work competently toward achieving their goals. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, (1998), stated that ideas are vitally important in leadership because they "are what mobilize people and galvanize them to join in an action for shared benefit". In order to spread ideas and motivate people, leaders need to be able to bring together many different individuals despite their possibly differing sets of ideas, principles and objectives. To this end, proficiency at building and fostering the cooperation of like minded people, along with collaborating with people who may hold different views, is extremely important (Banuri, & Najam, 2002).

Leaders need to be able to garner support and convince people in a variety of ways, because the significance of their vision is not always obvious to others, so their personal charisma and ability to negotiate are often vital in securing agreements and support. Gaining assistance and cooperation requires the leader to have excellent communication skills, as well as astute political insight, in order to "sense where, when, how and with whom progress can be made" (Boutros-Ghali, 1998). The interpersonal skills, political acumen and communicative abilities of leaders are essential because a "unified focus results from the leader's skill in communicating a unifying vision" (Bennis, & Goldsmith, 2003).

In addition, Boutros Boutros-Ghali asserts that leaders should provide direction and guidance; he declares that "ideas are not in themselves enough. Ideas must be woven together into a viable and coherent strategy … But the ideas must fit into a larger scheme" (1998). Providing inspiration, motivation, direction and building agreements with diverse parties through charisma, insight and effective communication are some of the most universal components of successful leadership.

The majority of leaders share many of the skills and characteristics previously listed. There are, however, contrasting styles of leadership. Traditional, or conventional, leadership is generally centred on a small, elite group or one strong leader. A leader often relies heavily upon personal charisma and is perceived as a "wise one" who "knows the way" (Sustainability Leadership Institute, n.d.). This leadership style, by definition, assumes that the people defer to and follow their leader.

Rakesh Khurana, Marvin Bower Professor of Leadership Development at the Harvard Business

School, says that systems that utilize predominantly charismatic authority models "promise a solution to all of our problems if only we follow the leaders with unwavering certitude" (Fullan, 2005). A traditional leader is the person who single handedly assumes the power to provide direction, initiate change and make choices. George H.W. Bush, former president of the United

States, for example, says that "the concept of a passive leader is an oxymoron" (1998). While this is true, he espouses a view that leaders should do most of the work, have their power centralized and that decisions and input should be given predominantly by veterans with the experience and perceived "wisdom" to make the correct choices (Hargreaves, 2006). Bush maintains the belief that the "essence of U.S. leadership is presidential leadership" (1998) where the power and responsibility of leadership resides in one person. This viewpoint is an excellent example of conventional leadership values.

Traditional leadership is often effective, but it is usually effective for short-term goals. Leaders who follow the conventional model of leadership are generally more inclined to ensuring their legacy and solving immediate problems rather than starting a process that will bear fruit long after they are gone. In fact, it has been observed by numerous authors that, while working toward sustainability, "The most egregious error is the search for the super leader" (Fullan, 2005, 30). Once the strong, charismatic leader is gone, their vision and system is susceptible to collapse. Successors to the traditional leaders must have the same charisma and perceived authority that their predecessor did, otherwise all is lost.

Projects and objectives which require long-term commitments and continual effort are, therefore, very vulnerable if they rely upon the support of conventional leaders. In addition, the traditional leadership model tends to be quite conservative by its very nature and is not willing to initiate the difficult transition and changes that are necessary today. By relying primarily on veterans and powerful leaders, this model is inclined to be conservative and slow in responding to change, thus making it obsolete when challenged by new problems which require original and innovative solutions. Additionally, the traditional leadership model is also inclined to be exclusionary. People who do not have a great deal of power or formal experience are most often left out of the decision making process (Hargreaves, 2006). This is a very pertinent issue today when the value of strengthening youth leadership is being recognized more frequently in civil society and other levels or governance. Also, according to Rakesh Khurana, when choosing traditional leaders, candidates who are perceived as high-profile

and charismatic often supplant other contenders who possess concrete knowledge and ideas of how to effectively address challenges and problems (Fullan, 2005).

A general exclusion from decision making processes and the preference for exceedingly charismatic, "superstar" leaders often arouse feelings of disenfranchisement and disillusionment in society. It is easy for people who do not feel involved in the process to lose their passion and motivation in working for the advancement of their leaders' agenda. This traditional model of centralized leadership has historically been prevalent in most countries of the world, but at this moment in the world's history it is necessary to transition to a new model.

2.2.Looking to the future with sustainable leadership

It is apparent that traditional leadership values will not be sufficient to facilitate the transition to sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. Sustainability leadership is the new model which is up to the test. This model of leadership utilizes universal aspects of successful leadership such as the ability to effectively communicate an inspiring vision, build coalitions for cooperation and the ability to navigate the intricate politics involved in all relationships. Sustainability leadership, however, focuses on long-term, substantive changes toward sustainability and promoting the common good.

This model has been defined as "leadership by values and leadership by teams and networks of committed individuals" (Timmer et al., 2007) and as the "conscious engagement in individual and collective actions that nurture and sustain the economic, environmental and social well-being of organizations and communities" (Turner et al., 2002). Sustainability leadership values are inherently dedicated to promoting the development of a just, sustainable future.. In order to make progressive steps to dealing with our collective problems, it is necessary that we use this style of leadership to help us collectively embrace fundamental changes in our underlying values and ethics that affect our societies, communities and ways of living (d'Evie & Glass, 2000).

Making the transition to sustainable lifestyles is required if we are to substantively address the considerable challenges that currently affect our world. To do this we need to shift our mindsets, to adopt a new perspective. It is becoming increasingly apparent that "the transition to sustainable development requires basic changes in the attitudes, values, and behaviour of all people in order to achieve social, economic, and ecological equity and security in the context of the globe's limited resources" (Brown, 2000).

We need to accept responsibility for the conscientious utilization and maintenance of our home country, and the whole world, keeping in mind the finite supply of its natural resources. The very definition of sustainability necessitates the adoption of a fundamentally holistic perspective that focuses on the long-term ability of the society to provide for us. Planning for an indefinite future requires an in-depth understanding of the interconnected and interdependent nature of the components which comprise our systems. In order to be sustainable, human development and actions have to act in accord with these systems. Our leaders, therefore, need to be proficient in systemic thinking and in understanding the wide array of both anticipated and unexpected consequences and end results of our actions. This must not be like numerous traditional and charismatic leaders who "avoid accountability and responsibility for outcomes" (Vardi and Weitz, 2004).

2.3 Systemic thinking, redefining and reinventing: A key to holistic solutions

Challenges such as climate change and the degradation of the environment are extremely complex and intricately interconnected (Timmer et al., 2008). Our world is more interconnected than it has ever been before; local matters can significantly influence global issues, and global issues often produce effects locally (Rockefeller, 2004). In order to successfully address these wide-ranging problems, a leader needs to be able to understand the components, causes and end results of numerous decisions and issues. A sustainability leader needs to be a systemic thinker, to have "a deep knowledge of how social, economic and environmental issues interact" (Timmer et al., 2007a, 23).

Sustainability leaders realize that the deep and complicated relationships between our challenges require equally sophisticated and complex solutions. In addition to understanding the interaction of social, economic and environmental factors, a leader must also notice and make sense of trends and understand behavioural patterns. In general, it is necessary to "Look for interrelationships among people, organizations and the actions they take, noticing the impact they have on one another in addition to society, the economy and the environment as a whole" (Sustainability Leadership Institute, n.d.). The ability to think holistically and draw the connections between issues is of prime importance in promoting and fostering responsible and sustainable lifestyle choices (Sustainability Leadership Institute, n.d.).

Systemic thinking, while requiring an inclusive view of all issues and decisions, needs to be applied across all sectors. When talking about business and technology, for example, John Davis affirms that "A "systems approach" has become increasingly necessary," and that, in the implementation of new technology, "all possible side-effects will need to be studied in great detail before widespread use is allowed" (1994). Systems thinking and the careful consideration of consequences is necessary in all of our decisions in order to move responsibly to sustainability.

It is evident that many world leaders are not in the practice of engaging in holistic planning and thinking. How

many policies and actions are taken that are effective for inadequate periods of time or that only address one particular aspect of a complex problem? Positive actions such as encouraging recycling, increased use of renewable energy sources and curbing carbon emissions are only partially effective because they do not address the root causes or gamut of related issues. Our leaders need to develop preventative measures instead of merely treating the symptoms of our greater problems.

Sustainable development requires radical rethinking and restructuring of our industrial and commercial systems along with new methods of consumption; the current, small efforts and measures are "so marginal as to have little influence on the future life on the planet, other than to delay the consequences for a generation or so" (Davis, 1994). Despite being faced by a web of complex challenges, sustainability leaders "do not stand back and conduct passive analysis, but because of their … system perspective learn to size up situations quickly and intuitively" (Fullan, 2005).

Systems thinking is absolutely essential to the success of sustainability measures; the implementation of these measures depends on the involvement and cooperation of people diffused into all parts of the system, from the top to the bottom (Fullan, 2005). In order to make substantial progress toward sustainable development, leaders need to appreciate and understand that "the goals of ecological protection, the eradication of poverty, equitable economic development, respect for human rights, democracy, and peace are interdependent and indivisible" (Tutu, 1998). These are all key factors in sustainable development, and they need to be addressed together; solving one of these challenges is not possible without dealing with the others.

In his book *Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action*, Michael Fullan explains that continual and widespread change is only possible if you have a large number of leaders, at different levels of the system, who are systems thinkers able to implement the principles of sustainability (2005).

2.4 Teamwork and collaborative efforts in rethinking leadership

Another one of the most noticeable factors of the sustainability leadership model is its emphasis on teamwork and cooperation instead of following the instruction of a single, powerful leader. The immensity of our challenges means that no individual, community, society or nation "can effectively address the environmental, economic, and social problems it faces … by acting alone" (Rockefeller, 2004, 2). Sustainable leaders are more effective at dealing with these large issues because they focus on collective action and see "leadership as a team endeavour, rather than an individual pursuit" (Timmer et al. 2007b, 4). Due to this way of thinking, results are achieved by networks of dedicated individuals and groups working together. These networks and teams are comprised of people who share a similar nature through their dedication to the goals of collaborative, transformative change (Trevino and Nelson, 2007).

The necessity of building strong teams requires that sustainability leaders learn excellent team management skills; they must be able to engage diverse groups of people, work across sectors and cultures, resolve conflicts and promote effective and constructive communication and exchange of ideas (Timmer et al., 2008). This kind of management goes beyond simply building coalitions and collaborating with others; it demands the ability to inspire individuals to become fully involved and take leadership roles themselves. These teams and networks are sources of action and forums for the development and diffusion of leadership. In this way, leaders are able to strengthen and cultivate the leadership capacity and capabilities in all the people involved. Sustainability leaders are responsible for peer-networking, supporting relationships and building partnerships in order to assure that people, "individually and collectively, create changes that make sense for long-term prosperity and survivability (McCelland and Burnham, 1976).

Team building and teamwork is clearly a vital factor in working to promote sustainability and the common good. Only through effective collaboration and interaction can we hope to positively affect our individual and collective situations. It is becoming increasing clear that "Partnership,cooperation, and collaboration among nations and diverse cultures in the 21st century have become essential to survival and human development" (Rockefeller, 2004, 2). Sustainability leaders recognize the importance of working together, and, as has been mentioned, they also help to build the leadership capacities of others so that actions and improvements are worked upon by many leaders (Hargreaves as cited in Fullan, 2005). By doing this, leaders are ensuring the continuance of collective action to reaching common goals.

The idea is to create a network of capable leaders who can, in turn, motivate and support other people in getting involved. In this way, responsible leaders are making effective choices so that their action and projects endure over time so that they can continue making the necessary changes (Hargreaves, 2006). Furthermore, by encouraging inter-generational communication, enlisting the capabilities and leadership skills of outside resource people and forming strategic partnerships, sustainability leaders are able to foster an atmosphere which stimulates cooperation, learning and the broadening of the network capabilities (Thomas et al., 1991). These actions not only make the work done by teams holistic and effective, but they are also ways of long-term planning to ensure that the work continues after a particular leader or individual has gone. By enlarging the leadership and action base, these leaders are able to give people a deep sense of ownership, a more individual

connection with what is happening. When working for the common good it is essential that we involve as many people as possible. We must address large issues and challenges at the local, national and global levels because we are all stakeholders in these decisions.

2.5 Capacity for innovation

One of the major benefits of widespread, collective action is the availability of a vast range of new ideas and perspectives. The inclusive nature of this model of leadership supports and nurtures the development and growth of another important characteristic of sustainability leadership – the capacity for innovation. The capacity for innovation was defined, by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), as the ability to "encourage decision-making across disciplines, understand the interdependence between environmental, economic and social systems, be open to new ideas, appreciate role of human ingenuity, and challenge the status quo" (Timmer et al, 2007a). This definition shows the interconnection and dependence of innovation with both systems thinking and teamwork. The close relationship and interdependence of vital sustainability leadership skills and capacities is especially appropriate given that the challenges are all interconnected.

Innovation is so fundamentally important to sustainability that Davis claims that, in moving toward sustainable business, "Innovation will be in the lead, with administration playing its supporting role of serving the needs of people and the planet" (Davis, 1994). The IISD also affirms the importance of this leadership skill by saying that two of the most recognized capabilities and values necessary for sustainability leaders are having a global mindset and the ability to be innovative (Timmer et al., 2007b).

Having an open mind and global mindset are especially important to the development of innovative ideas because "Stepping outside one's own context seems to enhance the young professionals' ability to span disciplines and cultures, which spurs their capacity for innovation. As there are few blueprints in sustainability work, this is a critical aptitude" (Timmer et al., 2007b). Boutros Boutros-Ghali believes that leaders must be responsible for envisioning new methods of making progress and that their choices should focus on the anticipated results and products instead of standard decisions and precedents (1998). This is particularly relevant to the challenges that we face today since their breadth and scope affect the entire world; challenges of this magnitude have not been faced before. Innovation, influenced and informed by the ability to engage in systemic thinking and a focus on teamwork, is a necessity in transitioning to sustainability.

Working in the field of sustainable development and focusing on addressing the common good necessitates the development of new capacities and creative ideas, and also the ability to connect a "very commonplace idea with a daring approach to translating it into something that will serve the goals of sustainable development" (Banuri & Najam, 2002, 93). The success of projects is increasingly less dependent upon their limits and guidelines, but more often results from the imagination, innovation, originality and dedication of the individuals involved in their realization (Banuri & Najam, 2002).

The IISD believes that people working in this field will often need to "obtain training beyond the traditional disciplines and skills acquired during their formal education,"and that effective leadership depends on "fresh and innovative thinking that uses existing tools and ideas as a springboard for larger social change" (Timmer et al., 2008, 5, 8). In this respect, the input and contributions of youth leaders and activists are extremely valuable.

Youth leaders are often more responsive to outside input, more imaginative and creative and they are often less constrained by the previous ways of doing things. It is necessary for young leaders to become actively engaged in projects and activities. It is important to recognize and utilize new ideas and solutions, and these solutions need to be implemented on multiple levels, local, national and global in order to affect all parts of the system. These ideas work to address common issues and they are also vital in working toward the common good. It is evident that, in many cases, that innovation and "newness incorporate some element of building or rejuvenating a community, a network, an alliance, or a social group" (Banuri & Najam, 2002, 93). The constant exchange and creation of innovative ideas is extremely important to the successful implementation of sustainable lifestyles and a transition to new ways of thinking.

2.6 Ethics as the foundation for responsible leadership

The unifying power of shared ethics is readily evident in all societies and communities. As a matter of fact,"Community at any level depends upon the existence of shared values" (Rockefeller, 2004). Ethics and moral values are communal rules that societies create in order "to prevent individuals from pursuing self-interest at the expense of others" (Dalla Costa, 1998). Ethics and moral values greatly influence the development of our relationships and mindsets, but many do not realize that these beliefs are inextricably linked to sustainable development. The interaction of people with their environment and their political and economic affairs are strongly influenced by their diverse moral values, cultural heritage and religious traditions (Engel, 1990) Therefore, addressing all of these interconnected issues requires a shift in mindset, and this transition requires the inclusion of a new set of ethics. Sustainability leaders realize the integral role played by ethics in motivating people to care for the world around them (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2003). For this reason, the crucial importance of moral leadership in sustainability cannot be understated.

Leaders are required to make ethical decisions because of the responsibility that comes with their power. They are responsible for making decisions that can have sweeping consequences that can go further than expected. The ability to affect the lives of many people requires an ethical sense of responsibility and accountability when making decisions. Leaders have a greater responsibility because they are empowered by the people to make decisions that will affect them all. Due to this power and their accountability for its use, leaders need an ethical basis that will inform their actions.

Sustainability leaders need to utilize their positions and provide a vision or a mission that is an empowering synthesis of shared beliefs that will spread hope and inspiration as we work towards sustainability (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2003). While studying the characteristics of sustainability leaders, IISD found that the importance of values seems to be a factor that separated professionals in sustainability work and those working in other fields (Timmer et al., 2008). On the other hand, events during the recent economic crisis have, for many people, validated the accuracy of Dalla Costa's statement that "[business] leaders are mostly terribly prepared to deal with moral discernment" (1998).

Ethics and morals, however, are significant factors in leadership only if the leaders are viewed as honest and faithful enough to behave consistently with their stated values. In order to inspire trust and have integrity it is crucial that sustainability leaders clearly "practice what they preach." The actions of sustainability leaders must be strongly based on ethics, especially now when

"The current disarray in corporations, church, hierarchies, governments, and nonprofit agencies have been caused by revelations of fraud, corruption, theft, and betrayal" (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2003). At the present time, the advanced nature of the media and communications facilitates the constant exposure of leaders surrounded by scandals and controversy. The ubiquitous images and news about leaders falling short of their perceived integrity or overstepping their moral bounds has caused many people to lose faith in them, and these betrayals of trust are directly linked to a disbelief in the possibility of change. Disillusionment, mistrust and cynicism are growing at a time when the challenges to our shared home, through climate change and other man-made difficulties, are reaching a breaking point. It is necessary for the global society to have leaders whom they can believe in, to have leaders who espouse the same beliefs and ethics. As Fullan reminds us, "The pursuit of moral purpose must be relentless, because it can easily slip away" (2005). Desmond Tutu declares that an "authentic leader has to have credibility" and be a "leader for the sake of others"(1998).

Sustainability leaders can both validate their credibility and good reputations by authentically exemplifying their personal adherence to a code of ethics that recognizes the fundamental need for sustainability and the importance of working for the common good. Ethical actions require us to look outside of our individual needs and goals. If we are to prosper in the long-term it is necessary to recognize the common aspects and responsibility that we share as members of humanity. We need leaders that express their sincerity and dedication to a new code of ethics by their actions. They need to work toward the interconnected goals of improving the common good and promoting sustainability. Adopting this new set of ethics is arguably the most salient features in their ability to lead us because "the sustainability of change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

The current challenges that face the entire world are immense and have arisen, to a large degree, because powerful societies and communities have lost their care and sense of responsibility for the environment and others. Irresponsibility, excessive self-interest and a lack of accountability have risen to the point where "modern cultural values have destroyed sustainable patterns of land and resource use" (Engle, 1990). This conspicuous loss of care and responsibility is, at a basic level, an ethical crisis, and subsequently indicates that sustainability is an ethical issue. This issue is not confined by political or ideological boundaries, by wealth or poverty or by any other designation or means of classification which have perpetually partitioned humanity. The endless division, compartmentalization and segmentation of humanity is one of the greatest impediments to addressing the collective problems and challenges which are becoming increasingly pressing as time goes on. It is true that numerous individuals, organization and nations have tried to address these problems, but how can their efforts combat the consequences and end result of global challenges which have foundations based on practices, lifestyles and mindsets which transcend national, cultural, ethical and ideological boundaries?

It is for this reason that the essential changes "needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living" need to be used to forge collaboration, because our shared challenges and problems "must be addressed by a constituency equally broad, with common values and norms, derived from recognized common interest" (d'Evie & Glass, 2000). Indeed, the highly integrated and interconnected challenges we all face oblige us to forgo immediate gratification and self-interest in order to work toward long-term sustainability and the common good. Immoderate and negligent practices have brought about and exacerbated these challenges, and therefore a "new set of assumptions and beliefs will be needed to guide development toward sustainability" (Davis, 1994, 329). The necessity of bringing humanity together to acknowledge our shared responsibility and focus upon transitioning to sustainable ways of life is of paramount importance. The rise of globalization and the

interconnection between the peoples and systems of the world mean that, in order to address the problems facing us, "a world community made up of a diversity of cultures and religions is both possible and necessary" (Rockefeller, 2004, 2). Furthermore, Dalla Costa says that "In these dark days of environmental devastation and growing exclusion, a global ethic gives expression to the growing and shared fear and provides an embracive and equitable framework for responding to it" (1998). We need a common framework of fundamental shared moral values, principles and ethics. This new set of ethics should be utilized "in helping define a *new social paradigm* which will promote sustainable development in each culture and each region of the world" (Bennis & Goldsmith, 2003). We, as members of humanity, need to accept collective responsibility for decisions that have been made by us, or for us. By being accountable for these decisions we affirm the need to significantly alter our social paradigm. We can guide and direct the process of surmounting our challenges "by creating an ethical vision of where we want the process to go and committing ourselves to it in a spirit of solidarity and hope" (Rockefeller, 2004).

3.0 An ethical Framework for Leaders

The need to essentially change our value systems in order to make the essential transition to sustainable lifestyles is addressed by the tenets of ethical leadership. It provides an ethical framework as described "a declaration of global interdependence and universal responsibility" (Rockefeller, 2004). It can effectively advise and support action that addresses the common challenges that are faced by humanity. Rethinking leadership ethically "represents a code of conduct, which sets forth fundamental values and principles to guide individuals, organizations, businesses, communities, and nations towards ecological, social, and economic sustainability" (d'Evie & Glass, 2000).

Rethinking leadership ethically does not, by any means, require the homogenization or standardization of cultures or beliefs; it encourages people to identify and refine their own beliefs and then recognize the common interests and concerns they share with others (d'Evie & Glass. 2000). The overall goal of the ethical leadership is to stimulate inner reflection of our own beliefs, values and priorities; it "challenges us to examine our values and choose a better way" (Turner et al., 2002). Through this process, however, it is also extremely important to see how our personal beliefs and values coincide with those of others, and it is crucial that we use the opportunity to strengthen our own views while engaging in meaningful dialogue with others (d'Evie & Glass 2000). This dialogue and exchange of views should enrich our efforts in working toward our common good. It is crucial that the ethical leadership will become more than a set of eloquent words and agreeable concepts, it "must ultimately become personal values that translate into joint actions" and the principles must "become activated to symbolize real values, real ideals, real commitment, real action, and real change" (d'Evie & Glass 2000).

When using a set of values and ethics to change society, there exists the "need to challenge injustice and unethical practices by engaging them, not by distancing from them or being detached" (Preston, 2001). The fundamentals of ethical leadership are built in a manner which directly addresses the interconnected issues and practices that are involved with transitioning to sustainability, it is a framework which engages the persistent problems found in the perspectives and ethics of today's modern societies. The main objective of this leadership is to fulfil the crucial necessity of a "shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community" (Trevino and Nelson, 2007). An encompassing concept of the ethical leadership is the recognition of the common community of humanity and the world which we inhabit. This notion is central to the change toward sustainable lifestyles, because it means that "we have ethical obligations because our lives take place in a web of interdependent relationships" (Preston, 2001). These obligations ask us to think about the common good and "by focusing on the "common good," moral synergies can be elicited, which can in turn lead to harmonious collective action (d'Evie & Glass, 2000). The shift toward sustainable practices needs to be motivated by our ethical and moral systems. These systems are some of the greatest factors in inspiring action and it is time that we make "a comprehensive ethical evaluation" when making decisions that will affect us all (Preston, 2001).

The increasing globalization and ubiquity of instantaneous communication technology in the world have allowed the influence of large national, transnational and international corporations, organizations and civil society into the processes of global governance (d'Evie & Glass, 2000).

This has many negative effects, such as facilitating the exploitation of poorer countries and regions, but it is also an opportunity for change. There are many organizations and civil society movements which are supporting the necessary shift toward sustainability. The initiation and continuation of most of these activities and ethical decisions will be the result of leaders who will be inspired and motivated by the act of rethinking leadership ethically. By using the ethical leadership as a framework and a basis for their decisions they will have helped make substantial progress towards our common goal of sustainability.

4.0 Recommendations on Rethinking leadership ethically

Different leaders are diverse in terms of age, gender, business experience, geographical location and education. However, they share important leadership characteristics, which suggest that guiding sustainability through an inclusive rethinking requires a distinctive type of ethical leadership. These characteristics should serve as the recommendation raised from this discussion and include but limited to: 1) having passion and vision, 2) thinking systemically with a long time horizon, 3) encouraging a participatory organizational culture, 4) modelling a willingness to learn, and 5) teaching others, including the competition. Leaders of organizational change toward sustainability demonstrate these characteristics, with a summary in table 4.0 in the appendix.

(i)   Leading with passion and Vision:

Ethical leaders are always Visionary and passionate about sustainability; vision and passion must come from top management for sustainability to take hold. All of the leaders will agree that if sustainability isn't a passion of the "boss" or of the leadership team, it simply won't happen. The passion for sustainability is driven by a clear sense of ethical values and the ability to motivate others to embrace change as a possibility, not something to be feared.

(ii)   Creating and Embracing Systems Thinking with a Long Term Horizon

A leader as a systems thinker should think "outside the box," see the synergistic or leverage potential in relationships throughout the organization/country, and take a long-term view of the benefits of change. Sustainability requires leaders to organize the knowledge and expertise within an organization/country in new ways. "Systems thinking" – where the leader considers the relationships between segments of the society and how to leverage those relationships – requires a different strategy than "business as usual." Thinking systemically means the business leader is looking for cross-functional, cross-departmental collaboration, and ways to work with the value chain, life cycle costs, technologies, suppliers, customer issues, and employee contributions simultaneously (Engel, 1990). Leaders who wish to promote sustainability also need to stretch their time horizon. Taking the long view is challenging for a culture that places high value on quarterly reports, and it may seem impossible to look this far out.

(iii)   Catalyse Innovation and be willing to learn

A leader should embrace systematic learning and innovate new solutions and strategies. Most of what will be possible with sustainability is yet undefined, so being a learner is vital. Sustainable leaders should read, talking with peers in their own capacity and follow the trials and successes of other pioneers.

(iv)   Be collaborator and create a participatory culture

Leaders should shift culture away from top-down decision-making towards increasingly collaborative, participatory culture where sustainability and other key initiatives are "everyone's job." Most of the leaders should encourage a participatory culture, including employee and stakeholder involvement, feedback and ownership. They agree this type of culture moves any change effort faster and farther than those that rely on more hierarchical forms of leadership. However, a leader needs to find a place along the spectrum of participatory culture that effectively engages staff and stakeholders, while allowing the leader to retain appropriate decision making authority in important areas. Typically there is a shift on the spectrum toward increased participation.

(V) Deepen the Commitment through value system

In this recommendation, personal integrity causes the leader to look at the whole system of their business and find other ways to incorporate sustainability. The key message here is that adherence to core values and skill in systems thinking advances the sustainability journey. Regardless of where they began, these leader should find ways to go beyond the initial incentives, innovations or regulations to implement more practices over time. To broaden the initiative, leaders should engage stakeholders, identify and address obstacles, and often seek external help from peers or consultants. This will demonstrate a movement from experimentation to readiness for adopting systems thinking within the business.

(Vi) Be an educator/ Advocate

Liberally share learning about sustainability with clients and competitors; do not hoard information for "competitive advantage."A leader should have the willingness to teach others, including competitors and clients. Create a "knowledge commons." The notion of a "knowledge commons" is counter-intuitive in a competitive system. Sharing information openly, however, is one of the core principles of sustainability, without which the shift to a new paradigm will arrive much slower or not at all.

5.0 Conclusion

We need to rethink the way that leadership has been conceptualized. Changing from traditional leaders to sustainability leaders is one step in the transition which is required to effect systemic changes toward a just and sustainable society. Elevating and emphasizing the common good and promoting sustainable lifestyles will be facilitated by the effort of dedicated leaders. These leaders will need to be able to do holistic and contextual

analyses of situations, be proficient in systemic thinking, engage in and initiate teamwork and have the capacity for innovation.

 Overall, however, sustainability leaders are required to embody and exemplify a lifestyle founded on a set of ethics that focuses on the importance of shared responsibility and proactive work toward the "common good" by promoting sustainability. The Tenets of "ethical leadership" should be used as an instrument that can help leaders facilitate and aid our progress to sustainable and responsible ways of living so that future generations will also be able to prosper in our nations (Githui, 2012).

The need for accountability in our choices is apparent, and the fundamentals of ethical leadership will help us and our leaders achieve the goal of providing "a universal code of conduct to guide people and nations toward sustainable development" (Brown, 2000).

Rethinking leadership ethically alone, however, is not sufficient in instigating meaningful changes toward sustainability; it needs to be supported by the aforementioned leaders who have a fundamental belief and ethical basis in sustainable living. They should be able to work effectively because they can inspire people, build coalitions, think systemically, encourage teamwork and implement innovative solutions to our common problems. This transition needs leaders who utilize the principles and values of ethical leadership as a tool in their work – leaders that see it as "a vision of hope and a call to action" (Tutu, 1998).

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Table 4.0 : A summary of the suggested recommendations

Visionary	Visionary and passionate about sustainability; vision and passion must come from top management for sustainability to take hold.
Systems Thinker	Think "outside the box," see the synergistic or leverage potential in relationships throughout the organization, and take a long-term view of the benefits of change.
Innovator	Embrace in learning and innovating new solutions, strategies.
Collaborator	Shift culture away from top-down decision-making towards increasingly Collaborative, participatory culture where sustainability and other key initiatives are "everyone's job."
Educator/Advocate	Liberally share learning about sustainability with clients and competitors; do not hoard information for "competitive advantage."

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