

OBSERVATIONS ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE ENVIRONMENT LAND MANAGEMENT AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

This study of the Environment Land Management and Rural Livelihoods (ELMARL) project in Tajikistan examines how different styles of leadership—namely, transformational and transactional—impacted this community-driven development (CDD) project during its five-year life cycle. It defines the key aspects of these leadership styles and illustrates them in action throughout the project’s planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) phases.

The ELMARL project offers interesting observations on the ways that effective leadership and community-driven development approaches embraced by the project mutually reinforced one another to achieve results.

Running from 2013 to 2018, the ELMARL project supported 2,350 small-scale investments across Tajikistan, enabling communities to introduce and adapt more effective ways of managing natural resources, diversify their income-generating opportunities, and pass their knowledge on to others. More than 53,000 households in 12 districts of Tajikistan adopted new sustainable land management practices, with climate resilience technologies and practices applied to over 44,000 hectares of land. Over 320,000 people benefited from the project (50 percent women), and partnerships were forged with 17 local civil society organizations (CSOs) to support community engagement activities. The World Bank implemented the USD18.65 million project with USD11.45 million from the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR).

Using ELMARL project documents and participant interviews, the study applies the Full Range Leadership Model to assess the role and qualities of leadership displayed during the various phases of the project cycle. The model distinguishes the key components of three broad leadership approaches: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (see Figure 1).

KEY INSIGHTS

The Full Range Leadership Model posits that transactional leadership engenders basic exchanges between leaders and followers, while transformational leadership encourages innovation and growth that results in optimal performance. The ELMARL project team demonstrated both leadership styles to positive effect.

Project design: ELMARL project planners demonstrated **transformational leadership through intellectual stimulation** by integrating learning from past experiences into the project design. Planners proactively applied lessons learned from the



QUICK FACTS

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RELEVANT CIF PROGRAM

Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR)

EVALUATION FIRM

LEAD Pakistan

RELEVANT COUNTRY

Tajikistan

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Community Agriculture and Watershed Management Project, an earlier World Bank project in Tajikistan that used the CDD approach. It emphasizes enhanced beneficiary agency and creates opportunities for beneficiaries to make independent decisions. The ELMARL project adopted CDD best practices to promote active participation from beneficiaries in choosing, designing, and managing rural investments and resource management plans.

Project implementation: The project team undertook a range of activities to address stakeholders' capacity constraints related to the CDD approach. These activities correspond to different components of transformational and transactional leadership.

Transformational leadership through inspirational motivation helped community members, CSOs, and the implementing agency, the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), better understand and commit to the CDD approach. An outreach campaign disseminated the CDD value proposition, its promise of more sustainable results, and examples of past CDD successes in Tajikistan. Local activists and women leaders were also engaged to promote the project and motivate women's participation.

Transformational leadership through individualized consideration addressed the different CDD-related knowledge and skill gaps encountered in the CEP and beneficiary groups by offering training, technical support, and mentorships in procurement, financial management, and community-driven sustainable land management. The project team also identified additional measures to support women's participation and success including creating women-only groups with more flexible meeting times and locations. These dedicated safe spaces allowed women to gain knowledge and confidence in speaking out about land and water management issues and increased their engagement in project activities. This aspect of transformational leadership also contributed to the development of a digital knowledge management platform to gather and disseminate knowledge and good practices.

Transformational leadership through intellectual stimulation allowed the CEP the flexibility to identify problems and potential solutions, resulting in creative new approaches to improve the application of the CDD approach. For example, when sub-project proposal templates proved to be too cumbersome and technical for easy use, they were simplified to enable communities to develop more successful project proposals.

Transactional leadership through management-by-exception was practiced by Rayon (District) Review Committees (RCC), a decentralized governance system established by the project to facilitate collaboration between the CEP, district/local government officials, and community members. The RCC oversaw the

development of community sub-projects and tracked deviations from plans and standards, taking remedial actions to improve the quality of sub-projects. This work evolved and became increasingly more collaborative and innovative as communities gained experience in developing sub-projects and exercising their ownership.

Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E): The project team demonstrated a mix of transactional and transformational leadership to significantly strengthen the M&E system and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Transformational leadership through individualized consideration addressed initial limited M&E capacity. The CEP and other stakeholders received dedicated M&E training during project implementation.

Transactional leadership through contingent reward was demonstrated by setting clear deliverables, timelines, and due dates to be met.

Transactional leadership through management-by-exception was manifested through corrective action when there were deviations from standards.

Throughout the project cycle: Several factors enabled the ELMARL project team to exercise transformational leadership to initiate and manage positive change and achieve project goals.

- Building the CDD approach into the design of the ELMARL project created greater potential for beneficiaries to exercise agency and intellectual stimulation.
- Seeing the challenges of the CDD approach as incentives, rather than constraints, encouraged leaders to be more creative with the project.
- Giving grants, rather than loans, allowed for greater risk-taking and innovation.
- Institutional arrangements within the CEP and the decentralized RCC system enhanced capacity building, collaboration, and overall project management at all levels.

FIGURE 1 | THE FULL RANGE LEADERSHIP MODEL

Leadership Approaches	Leadership Components	
Transformational Leadership	Idealized influence: Acting as role models for followers	Inspirational motivation: Motivating and inspiring followers
	Intellectual stimulation: Stimulating followers' efforts to innovate	Individualized consideration: Addressing individuals' varying needs for achievement and growth
Transactional Leadership	Contingent reward: Obtaining the follower's agreement on what needs to be delivered in return for promised or actual material reward	Management-by-exception: Using corrective action (based on active tracking of deviations from standards or the passive waiting for such deviations)
Laissez-faire Leadership	The avoidance or absence of leadership	

Source: Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006) Transformational Leadership, 2nd edn., Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.