

# The role of leadership in policies to address loss and damage in Bangladesh

Erin Roberts  
PhD student  
King's College, London



It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The **credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;** who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because **there is no effort without error and shortcoming;** but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; **who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly,** so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

**- Theodore Roosevelt -**

# Philosophers through the ages on leadership

- **Philosopher-kings:** Plato argued that philosophers should be leaders and leaders philosophers, motivated by the search for the “ultimate truth” (Takala, 1998)
- **North stars:** Confucius defined a leader as someone who **puts the needs and feelings of others before his own and provides moral guidance for others to follow** (Eno, 2015)
- **Taking ownership/A sense of belonging:** Aristotle’s view was that leaders are more likely to be effective if they have a stake in the organizations or communities they are leading as they will be more likely to advocate for the common good (Gunderman, 2006)

# What is leadership? What the literature says . . .

## Organizational management and psychology

**Authentic leadership:** leaders are ethical and transparent, encourage openness and value inputs from others (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio et al., 2007)

**Transformational leadership** involves **creating a vision and inspiring followers** to take collective action for the collective good (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985)

**Collective leadership:** members of a team influence one another which reinforces relationships and helps the team develop (Carson et al., 2007; Avolio et al., 2009).

**Wisdom leadership:** Leaders embody self-knowledge and self-empowerment (Chakraborty, 1995; Chatterjee, 2006)

**Theory U:** true leaders have an open heart which requires a vulnerability and a willingness to let go of what we think we know (Scharmer, 2016)

## Political science

**Structural leadership:** leaders use **structural power** to influence negotiations (Young, 1991; Uderal, 1994)

**Entrepreneurial leadership:** leaders use **negotiating skills** to influence negotiations (Young, 1991)

**Intellectual leadership:** leaders lead through the **power of ideas** (Young, 1991)

**Directional leadership:** leaders **lead by example** (Maine, 1995; Parker and Karlsson, 2010)

# Research findings: How do stakeholders in Bangladesh define leadership?

What qualities do leaders have?	
<b>Willingness to take risks/sacrifice</b>	“The bigger one is willingness to stick their necks out and do something and that’s rarer. To be proactive. But if you get someone who is really proactive then you can really get things done. We’ve had occasion when we had people who were willing to do things. The movement is you go up the hill and rest for a while and then move a bit more and rest again but the trajectory is upward and when we have a good leader it’s easier.”
<b>Knowledge of the issues</b>	“ And since they have that knowledge, they gained that understanding. They felt to take the leadership, they stepped up. There are a lot of controversies around loss and damage but they continue advocating for it. They find new avenues . . . They learn new things.”
<b>Trustworthy</b>	“Trustworthiness, confidence and personal integrity and honesty matter. If a leader doesn’t have that one he cannot generate confidence among community members “

# Research findings: What role is leadership playing in policies to address loss and damage in Bangladesh?

<b>The role of leadership in the adoption of loss and damage as a subject of policy discussions</b>	
<b>Building a team: leadership at all levels (the tripartite of leadership)</b>	“Whenever we took a decision we discussed together. I also had good access to the minister. And this network worked well, not only on this project but many others – policy analysis, institutional analysis, vulnerability assessment. We also analyzed all the policies on sustainable development and their links to the negotiations. When something came from [the joint secretary], the minister agreed.”
<b>Building a coalition: leadership from multiple angles</b>	“The one word for why Bangladesh is where it is a variety of leaders that arose over time that made stuff happened. If you look at Bangladesh over the past ten years it’s a lot of progress but it happens in spurts. It’s a jump and then we go to the next level and then it’s another jump and then we can start doing a lot of stuff. It’s a sort of stochastic movement where nothing happens and we get stuck for a little while. The trick for us working outside government is being ready to mobilize ourselves the moment we get a decision from the government that enables us to do something.”
<b>Capitalizing on opportunities: translating the global to the national</b>	“Two individuals that played a big role was the minister, he was in given the task of facilitating the finance negotiations and [the joint secretary] who was negotiating loss and damage. That led to a request to CDKN to fund a project on loss and damage which was the first global research on loss and damage.”

# Conclusions?



- Leaders develop a vision and inspire others to achieve that vision
- Leaders take risks and sometimes those risks have consequences
- Leaders know what they know and what they don't know and they build teams of advisors around them
- Leadership comes in cycles: when there is good political leadership things move forward and when there isn't the gap is filled by other types of leadership
- Policies evolve over time and policy entrepreneurship requires patience and persistence
- Leaders are generally confident, trustworthy, knowledgeable, dedicated and hard-working
- Leadership skills can be developed but true leaders are born with a fire inside