

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



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Acronyms

4IR	fourth industrial revolution
AEC	Anti-Eviction Campaign
AFLI	African Leadership Institute
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AWLI	African Women's Leadership Institute
AYLS	African Youth Leadership Study
DAO	decentralised autonomous organisation
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex
MUSO	Moi University Student Organisation
NFT	non-fungible token
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PRISMA	preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses
SCR	spheres of complementary responsibility
SONU	Student Organisation of Nairobi University
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLT	transformative leadership theory
TLWR	Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights
TRC-L	Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia
TSI	transformative social innovation
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UoN	University of Nairobi
YLDPs	youth leadership for development programmes

Prologue: Leadership on the African continent

Transformative Leadership in African Contexts: Strategies for Social Change is an original, practice-oriented contribution to the idea of transformative leadership – leadership that attempts to bring about change at systemic and structural levels.

This edited collection emerged from a research partnership between the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Mastercard Foundation. For the past 12 years, the Mastercard Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic institutions in the world, has had as one of its goals creating opportunities for the young people it supports through its scholarship programme to become transformative leaders. It has encouraged these students and graduates of its programmes to serve others, give back to their communities, become entrepreneurs, and provide economic opportunities to others, in so doing contributing to the social and economic transformation of the African continent. In short, the Foundation wanted these young people to become transformative leaders.

Over the past five years, as part of the ensuing research study entitled *The Imprint of Education*, the HSRC research team (of which the editors are a part) have deepened their thinking on what it means to be a transformative leader on the African continent. Specifically, we have sought to ask what it means for *young graduates*, especially because they have extensive responsibilities and expectations upon their shoulders and are mainly still in their twenties and thus relatively inexperienced. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the HSRC team was able to convene two extensive online webinars to explore ideas about transformative leadership, interrogate who writes about it globally, and debate how it might apply in African contexts. In 2022, the HSRC convened a face-to-face symposium in Zanzibar, Tanzania, and 40 scholars – some novice, some senior – addressed the following questions: how does transformative leadership apply to the past, present, and future?; how might it be used in technological, cultural, political, social, schooling, and university contexts?; and how is it different from or similar to conventional understandings of leadership? This book is a result of these collaborations.

As the number of African graduates increases, their contributions as leaders able to take their place in leading the social, ethical, and economic transformation on our continent cannot be underestimated. What has not been available, until now, is a resource that can be put into their hands, and into the hands of the many institutions globally who are concerned with nurturing a new generation of African leaders. We are well aware of the many crisis narratives about our continent, but we have not wanted to provide individual commentary on each

crisis. Instead, this book allows for more expansive thinking, beyond mere correctives. More importantly, it is intended to provoke discussion, and to be applied to the particular context in which emerging leaders find themselves.

Transformative Leadership in African Contexts breaks new ground by taking as its unit of influence wider social, political, and material issues. Key in each of the essays in this book has been the argument made in the closing chapter, namely that transformative change, drawing on the influence of Paulo Freire (1970) and Carolyn Shields (2010), is change that must always, and ultimately be concerned with changing the systems that result in human suffering so that human beings may flourish. The book has taken seriously Desmond Tutu's imperative that those who are serious about change must 'stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in' (also cited in the closing chapter). But *Transformative Leadership in African Contexts* goes even further to ask what can be learned (and unlearned) from African cultural practices and settings to deepen understandings and demonstrate the relevance of this kind of leadership.

Furthermore, while seemingly a small addition, at the end of each chapter there is a brief tweet/X/thread that sums up the key message, followed by three or four well-crafted discussion questions that expand this from an academic book, which it is, into one deeply concerned with praxis and application. This book will be indispensable to young people, scholars, researchers, and practitioners who are interested in bringing about transformative change and consciously deepening how this can be done through mindfully engaging the frame of transformative leadership.

Sharlene Swartz, Tarryn De Kock, and Catherine A. Odora Hoppers

The editors