



# COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

## TOOLKIT

● Good knowledge of the social problem you address

● Understand the environment you are working in

● Clear purpose

● Strong public narrative

● Good governance

● **Collective leadership**

● Organisational structure for effectiveness and agility

● Marketing strategy and communication plan

● Human Resources

● Financial sustainability planning

● Financial management & analysis

● Operational processes, systems and infrastructure

● Create dynamic partnerships

● Quality of mentoring-to-work

● Social impact

## COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

There is a common misconception in the field of social entrepreneurialism that social entrepreneurs can build impressive organisations single-handedly, based solely on charisma and relentless personal endurance. In reality it **“takes a village” to support the growth and development of successful organisations.**

Telling compelling stories and the personal leadership is only one element that contributes to sustainability (Kelly Janus, 2017). A culture of collective and collaborative leadership and the development of a social entrepreneurial mindset of all employees are also important success factors. Especially in a more complex or VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) context. This sort of leadership and training would allow employees and teams to operate with autonomy and decision-making authority (Kelly Janus, 2017; 2018). **A fundamental choice for more collaborative and ‘horizontal’ approaches of organising requires: personal leadership and autonomy, a clear purpose, open and participatory meetings, a high level of transparency, decision making authority, personal leadership in learning and development and building trustful relationships** (Slade, 2018).

Leading through complexity also requires a leadership approach that knows how to deal with constant changes in the environment and keep the organisation alive. At the University of Groningen a research on leadership styles was conducted between 2008 and 2012, which explored how leadership in mentoring organisations influences effectivity and sustainability of the mentoring initiative (Vos et.al, 2012). The researchers distinguished between four leadership styles: visionary leadership, participatory leadership,

socio-emotional leadership, and task-oriented leadership. Before highlighting the research, it is important to emphasise that our study indicates that these features cannot be ascribed to the director alone, they have to be features of several team members.

The Groningen research posits that **mentoring projects who have a project leader with a visionary leadership style have (1) more successful duos (mentor – mentee), (2) are able to engage mentors for other tasks than mentoring alone, and (3) have a larger potential for growth.** Visionary leadership in combination with task oriented leadership supports the effectiveness of mentoring. Participatory leadership supports the repeated engagement of mentors. Although socio-emotional leadership is also, to some extent, related to the quality of the mutual contact, **participative leadership in particular determines the strength of the connection between the project and the collaborating partners.** This is a finding that the researchers did not expect from a theoretical point of view as they expected socio-emotional leadership would have a bigger influence. One explanation for this outcome might be that partners who get the chance to co-create several elements of the mentoring process feel more valued. Having a visionary leadership style is supportive to the communication and recognition of seeing the added value of mentoring by the stakeholders. Project leaders who are able to convey a strong vision are able to convince partners and stakeholders that mentoring is a good addition to the regular practices. A participatory leadership style often creates support for the mentoring project by internal as well as external stakeholders, which facilitates the integration of mentoring in organisations. Leaders of mentoring

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projects who combine a visionary and participatory leadership style often find more willingness from their stakeholders to support the organisation financially, now and in the future. Garringer et. al. (2015) also found that **leaders of mentoring programmes should be involved in advocacy work that promotes the awareness of mentoring at a community level and adequate resources from public and private sources for mentoring.**



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## HOW TO TOOLBOX

Inspired by Kelly Janus (2017) and Slade (2018) we formulate the following questions. We suggest to have conversations with the members of your teams on these questions:

Is the purpose of the mentoring organisation and the social change you want to achieve clear to every employee?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Are the (team)meetings based on collaborative principles and is wise agenda setting used?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Is it clear for everyone what the metrics for success are within their roles?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the formulation of the metrics supported by the organisation, based on transparency (e.g. budget, processes, personnel, ...)?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the mentoring organisation processes in place to give each other horizontal feedback?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Are decision making processes clear for everyone?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the guiding language “we” opposed to “I” when talking about the organisation?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Have all team members opportunities to act as the face of the organisation in some capacity?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Can everybody take a lead on initiating learning opportunities?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the relational foundation of the organisation a permanent point of attention (internal and external)?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>
Are regular bonding opportunities such as in-person social gatherings organised within the organisation as well as with mentors, mentees, partners and stakeholders?	yes <input type="checkbox"/> - no <input type="checkbox"/>



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**Stepping stones for wiser action**

What are the key learnings?

What are the actions to take?

Who is responsible?

What is the deadline for the first step?

Who will notice the difference?

How will we notice and evaluate the difference?

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