An Analytical Study On Leadership Challenges for Human Service Administrators

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Abstract:

The present study addresses itself to the challenges that human service administrators face in maintaining and moving their organizations forward. The study has identified twelve leadership challenge dimensions, explored variations in these challenges across agencies and administrators, and finally draws a concluding line and discusses policy implications based on the findings of the study for leadership development programs targeted at human service administrators.

Key Words:

Leadership Challenges, Human Service Administrators, Social Responsibility and Non-Profit Agencies.

Introduction and Problem Statement

Experience reveals that directors of human service agencies face challenges while they deal with day-to-day conflicts, multiple interest groups, and ambiguous situations. Ample anecdotal evidence supports this perception-stories of debates with boards over personnel issues, of frustration when clients' needs cannot be met, of conflicts with neighborhoods over the location of homeless shelters or

halfway houses. Yet, compared to research documenting the tasks of managers in for-profit organization (Mintzbreg, 1973; Tornow and Pinto, 1976), empirical work focused on the challenges faced by directors of human service agencies is scant. According to many, a human service agency usually means local nonprofit agencies that provides services aimed at meeting the social needs of a community, such as health, social services, arts, and recreation agencies.

Since the nonprofit sector has some unique characteristics, one cannot necessarily generalize on the basis of the results of research on business leaders in this sector. The missions of nonprofit agencies have a political and social emphasis and reflect values of altruism, philanthropy, social responsibility, equity, and fairness (Farrow, Valenzi, and Bass, 1980; Brown and Covey, 1987; Rubin, Adamski, and Block, 1989).

The nature of their missions leads to multiple service objectives and makes it difficult to measure their organizational performance (Newman and Wallender, 1978). Also, the nonprofit organization's governance structure, although typical of nonprofit organizations, establishes both lay volunteer (board) and professional (director) authority, each with its own statuses, roles, responsibilities, and values (Kramer, 1987). The success of an agency relies heavily on the effectiveness, involvement, and commitment of its board (Middleton, 1987; Independent Sector, 1989).

Another unique characteristic of nonprofit organizations is funding. They lack access to capital and depend on a broad mix of revenue sources, most of them non-market ones (Fottler, 1981; Young, 1987; O'Neill and Young, 1988). Finally, the reliance of nonprofit organizations on volunteers creates differences in the domains of recruitment, rewards, and employee-volunteer relations (Herman and Heimovics, 1989). Volunteers have a great deal of discretion in how and what they do (Young, 1987), and they often have changing expectations and motivations (Middleton, 1986), which can lead to turnover in membership.

In order to develop the leaders of human service agencies, one needs to understand the challenges they face in maintaining and moving their organizations forward. How should one define the core challenges faced by human service administrators that cut across individual situations? Do challenges differ by characteristics of the agency, such as size or age? Do they vary by background of the administrator? What types of training and development will help leaders to deal successfully with these challenges? This paper addresses the authors' research efforts

to answer these questions, which constitute the problem of the study.

Past Research

Past research on nonprofit managers is scarce; the present authors have come across only two interesting studies which provide some insights into the leadership challenges experienced by human service administrators.

Herman and Heimovics (1989) asked chief executives regarded as highly effective and executives not considered to be as successful to describe critical incidents that had successful and unsuccessful outcomes. The researchers used these events to discover common issues in nonprofit management, examine the skills and abilities of the nonprofit leaders, and distinguish between the behaviors of the highly effective ones from the behaviors of those who are less highly regarded. They conclude that adjusting programs to changes in funding patterns, fund-raising, and board-executive relations are often considered major challenges for nonprofit managers.

The Independent Sector (1989) sponsored a four-year study on effective sector leadership and management. Its findings revealed common points from seven different projects that "identify factors that differentiated effective or excellent organizations from all others" (Independent Sector, 1989: 2). The three critical factors are a clear sense of mission, a leader who creates a culture that makes fulfillment of the mission possible, and an involved and committed board that maintains positive relations with the director and the larger community.

Present Study

Given the limited amount of research about the critical demands as seen by leaders in the nonprofit sector, the current study has been conducted to determine what managers of human service agencies perceived to be their leadership challenges and which of these challenges are most pervasive. The authors' present study was also interested in whether certain characteristics of an agency or a manager are related to the kinds of challenges that managers experienced.

Methodology

The present study is based on both secondary and primary information. The present researchers interviewed twenty-seven directors of human service agencies in Dhaka. The structured interviews consisted of a number of open-ended questions that focused on managing relationships, setting up agendas, and career issues. The majority of the interviewees managed private human service agencies;

four operated in public agencies. The agencies were diverse in terms of services provided and staff size. Males and females were equally represented in this group of administrators.

The interviews served as the basis for a more comprehensive survey sent to a larger sample of human service administrators. The major section of the survey contained sixty-eight leadership challenge items. For each item, the administrator used a five-point scale to indicate the degree to which he or she had experienced the challenges in his or her position. Each item represented a specific challenge that the authors of the paper had heard about in their interviews from two or more directors. These specific challenges included the lack of developmental opportunities for staff, conflict with the board over major decisions, getting staff to see the big picture, balancing work and personal life, and trying something new that the agency had never achieved.

The survey also sought information about characteristics of the administrator's agency, including number of years in existence, current annual budget, number of board members, public or private status, affiliation with national organizations, and the funding sources on which it relied (foundations; local, state, and/or government; community or civic groups; churches; fees for products or services; contributions from individuals).

The participants were asked to indicate the number of years they had been managers, the number of years they had been in their present position, whether they had ever worked outside the nonprofit sector, whether they had mentors in their careers, whether they still maintained a direct service role, and whether they served on the board of another agency.

The survey was sent to three hundred human service administrators. The sample was obtained from three different sources: participants in a workshop for hospice organizations in the northern part of Bangladesh, a representative selection of human service administrators in Metropolitan and non-Metropolitan Dhaka obtained from the mailing list of the Human Services Institute, and directors of agencies in Chittagong metropolitan area. Managers from university and hospital settings were also included.

A total of 161 managers submitted usable responses—a 54 percent return rate. Seventy-four percent of the organizations that they represented were private agencies; 40 percent were part of a national organization. Of the total, 134 respondents were executive directors and 27 were managers at other levels. Sixty-

three percent of the group were females. On the average, the managers had held their current position for five years; they had been a manager for eleven years; and had worked in the human service field for sixteen years. Counseling, education, and health care were the primary services most often mentioned.
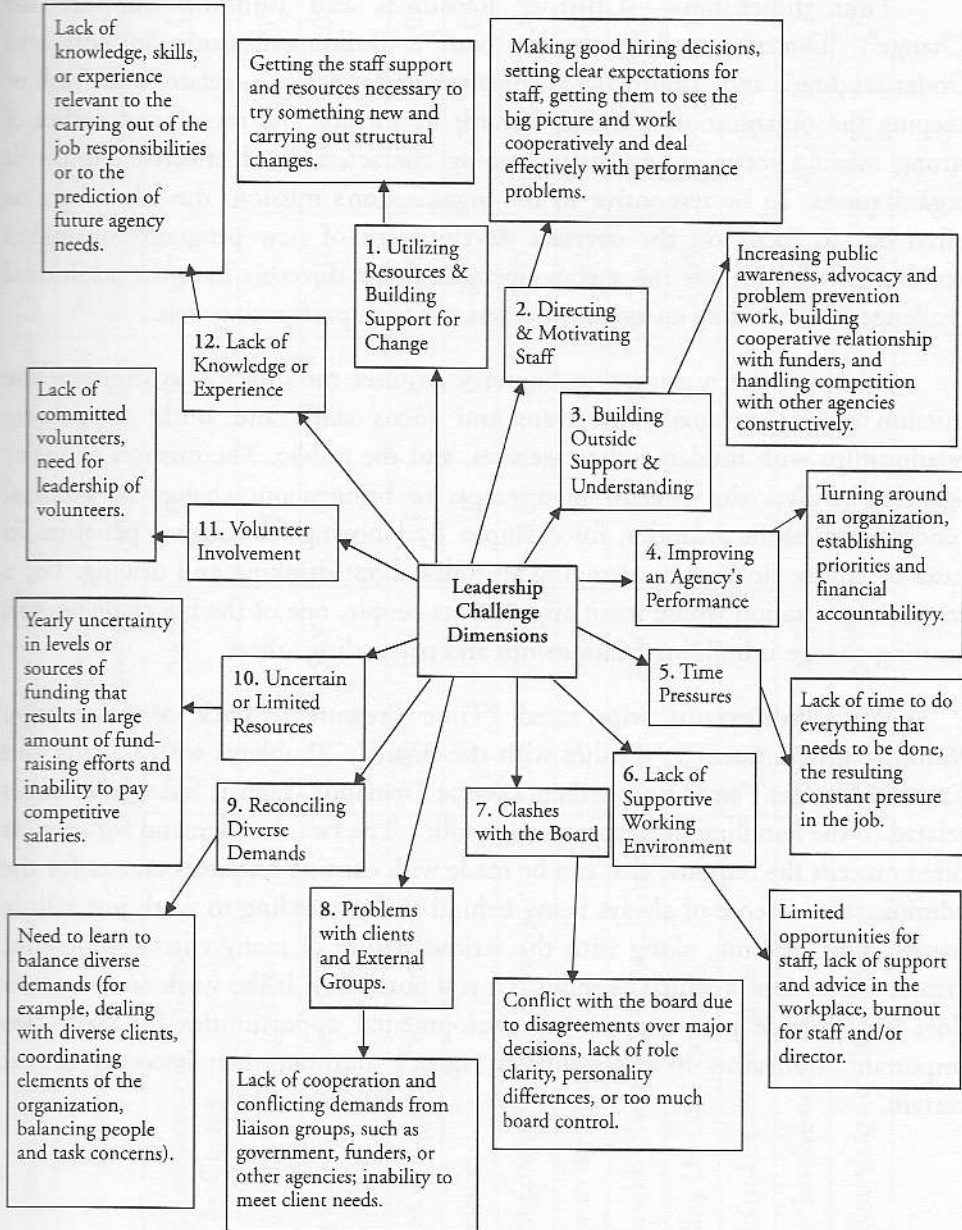
Analysis and Interpretation

In order to define the core leadership challenges represented by the sixty-eight challenge items, the authors of this paper grouped challenge items that were highly related to one another statistically and looked for common themes within groups. The authors' assumption was that these homogeneous groups of items represented the underlying dimensions of leadership challenges. The authors used VARCLUS, a variable clustering technique (SAS Institute, 1985), to divide the sixty-eight leadership challenge items into groups that could be interpreted as primarily unidimensional. A twelve-cluster solution was chosen as the one most closely meeting statistical and interpretability criteria.

Ratings on the items that made up a cluster were averaged to obtain an overall score on the cluster. Thus, each participant in the survey received a score on each of twelve leadership challenge dimensions. Each dimension consisted of three to eleven challenge items. Figure#1 describes these dimensions. Table#1 shows the means and standard deviations for the dimension scores.

To detect patterns in the variability of challenges across agencies and individuals, the present authors correlated the leadership challenge dimension scores with the characteristics of the administrator's agency and the individual administrator. Table#2 shows a number of variables in these tables are dichotomous. In these cases, the presence of a state or condition (for example, agency is part of a national organization, administrator had a mentor etc.) was coded 1, and its absence was coded 0. For gender, females were coded 1, and males were coded 0. To compensate for a skewed budget distribution within the sample of the present study, the researchers (i.e. authors) collapsed the raw budget numbers into eight categories, with 1 representing the smallest budgets (less than Tk 10,000) and 8 representing the largest (greater than Tk 100 lakh). The number of funders variable was created by summing the number of responses checked on the funding source list.

The following figure #1shows the Leadership Challenge dimensions:

Figure #1: Leadership Challenge Dimensions.

Lack of knowledge, skills, or experience relevant to the carrying out of the job responsibilities or to the prediction of future agency needs.

Getting the staff support and resources necessary to try something new and carrying out structural changes.

Making good hiring decisions, setting clear expectations for staff, getting them to see the big picture and work cooperatively and deal effectively with performance problems.

1. Utilizing Resources & Building Support for Change

2. Directing & Motivating Staff

Increasing public awareness, advocacy and problem prevention work, building cooperative relationship with funders, and handling competition with other agencies constructively.

12. Lack of Knowledge or Experience

3. Building Outside Support & Understanding

Lack of committed volunteers, need for leadership of volunteers.

11. Volunteer Involvement

Turning around an organization, establishing priorities and financial accountabilityy.

4. Improving an Agency's Performance

Leadership Challenge Dimensions

Yearly uncertainty in levels or sources of funding that results in large amount of fund-raising efforts and inability to pay competitive salaries.

10. Uncertain or Limited Resources

5. Time Pressures

Lack of time to do everything that needs to be done, the resulting constant pressure in the job.

9. Reconciling Diverse Demands

6. Lack of Supportive Working Environment

7. Clashes with the Board

Need to learn to balance diverse demands (for example, dealing with diverse clients, coordinating elements of the organization, balancing people and task concerns).

8. Problems with clients and External Groups.

Limited opportunities for staff, lack of support and advice in the workplace, burnout for staff and/or director.

Conflict with the board due to disagreements over major decisions, lack of role clarity, personality differences, or too much board control.

Lack of cooperation and conflicting demands from liaison groups, such as government, funders, or other agencies; inability to meet client needs.

Discussion based on the above figure

The above figure shows that the twelve dimensions provide a framework for understanding core leadership challenges faced by human service administrators.

Four dimensions—"Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change", "Directing and Motivating Staff", "Building Outside Support and Understanding", and "Improving an Agency's Performance"—relate to the task of keeping the organization working towards its mission. As mentioned earlier, a strong mission focus is one distinguishing characteristic of effective nonprofit organizations. To be responsive to the organization's mission, the administrator often has to focus on the overseas development of new programs or makes internal changes in how the agency operates. Some directors have the additional challenge of revitalizing an agency that has not been performing well.

Keeping the organization on track requires the director to translate the mission into clear goals, motivate and focus staff, and build supportive relationships with funders, other agencies, and the public. The mission of many agencies involves the director in attempts to bring about change in political processes or public attitudes; for example, by lobbying for rougher penalties in cases of family violence or changing attitudes about drinking and driving. For a service organization whose main assets are its people, one of the big challenges in creating change is building relationships and persuading others.

An administrator who rated "Time Pressure", "Lack of Supportive Working Environment", "Clashes with the Board", "Problems with Clients and External Groups", and "Reconciling Diverse Demands" high is facing challenges related to the handling of pressure and conflict. The fact that demand for services often exceeds the response that can be made with existing resources creates for the administrator a sense of always being behind and of needing to work just a little harder. This pressure, along with the serious nature of many clients' problems, creates a situation in which burnout is a real possibility. If the work environment does not provide peer support or developmental opportunities for staff, two important motivators in the nonprofit agency, burnout then becomes almost certain.

Table #1: Means and Standard Deviations for Leadership Challenge Dimensions and Correlations with Agency Characteristics

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Private Agency	National Affiliate	Years in Existence	Size of Budget	Diversity in Funding	Size of Board
Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change	2.43	0.83	0.12	0.02	0.07	0.18*	0.11	-0.07
Directing and Motivating Staff	2.35	.76	.07	.08	.01	.17*	.23**	-.09
Building Outside Support and Understanding	2.64	0.68	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.04	0.03	-0.16*
Improving an Agency's Performance	2.28	0.96	0.09	-0.13	0.11	-0.03	0.09	-0.11
Time Pressures	3.29	0.89	0.08	0.01	-0.08	-0.04	0.02	-0.20**
Lack of Supportive Work Environment	2.65	0.78	-0.07	0.03	-0.07	0.05	-0.02	-0.11
Clashes with the Board	1.73	0.69	-0.05	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09	0.07	-0.09
Problems with Clients and External Groups	2.44	0.66	-0.02	0.10	0.05	0.26**	0.22**	-0.11
Reconciling Diverse Demands	2.66	0.81	0.05	0.09	-0.05	0.01	0.10	0.01
Uncertain or Limited Resources	3.23	0.93	0.13	0.10	-0.16*	-0.11	0.10	-0.13
Volunteer Involvement	2.44	0.95	-0.15*	-0.02	-0.16*	-0.27**	-0.11	-0.07
Lack of Knowledge or Experience	2.14	0.71	0.02	0.03	-0.06	-0.14	-0.07	-0.12

*p<.05
**p<.01

Table #2: Correlations of Leadership Challenge Dimensions and Administrator Characteristics

Dimension	Age	Gender	Educational Level	Years as Manager	Years in Position	Experience in Other Sectors	Mentor in Past	Direct Service Role	Board of Another Agency
Utilizing Resources and Building Support for Change	-0.21**	-0.09	0.02	0.09	-0.14	-0.22**	0.13	-0.08	0.03
Directing and Motivating Staff	-0.16*	-0.10	-0.02	0.14	-0.02	-0.23**	0.13	-0.07	0.07
Building Outside Support and Understanding	-0.06	-0.09	-0.03	0.07	0.06	-0.21**	0.09	0.09	0.05
Improving an Agency's Performance	-0.16*	-0.09	0.10	-0.02	-0.17*	-0.08	0.05	-0.04	-0.18*
Time Pressures	-0.14	0.10	-0.18*	-0.08	-0.05	-0.06	0.18*	0.12	0.06
Lack of Supportive Working Environment	-0.28**	0.07	-0.17*	-0.11	-0.11	-0.10	0.11	0.02	-0.02
Clashes with the Board	-0.12	-0.05	-0.03	-0.09	-0.12	0.02	0.17*	0.00	-0.19*
Problems with Clients and External Groups	-0.12	-0.13	-0.05	0.18*	0.16	-0.28**	0.06	-0.10	0.00
Reconciling Diverse Demands	-0.11	0.01	-0.18*	0.01	-0.04	-0.20**	0.09	0.14	-0.05
Uncertain or Limited Resources	0.01	0.10	-0.07	-0.08	-0.12	-0.06	0.06	0.18*	0.05
Volunteer Involvement	0.27**	0.16*	-0.18*	-0.31**	-0.11	0.07	0.04	0.19*	-0.11
Lack of Knowledge or Experience	-0.28**	0.09	-0.18*	-0.23**	-0.14	-0.03	0.06	0.19*	-0.04*

*p<.05
**p<.01

Another potential source of conflict for human service administrators is the diverse relationships that they manage with stakeholders—board members who are too controlling, bureaucratic government regulatory agencies, unrealistic clients, funders with conflicting wishes, and other agencies who might fight over turf. The multiplicity of goals in a nonprofit organization can also lead to value-laden conflicts within the agency over the activities that are appropriate for the agency to be involved in. The administrator may also experience internal conflict when trying to reconcile people and task concerns or when coordinating different parts of the organization.

The final dimensions—"Uncertain or Limited Resources", "Volunteer Involvement", and "Lack of Knowledge or Experience"—relate to management of uncertainty and ambiguity. Since most financial resources in human service agencies are not obtained from the individuals who receive service, there is no clear link between the quality of the service that the agency provides and its revenues. The third-party funding process is much more tenuous, and the director faces a constant need to renew sources of funding. Volunteers are another source of uncertainty. What will motivate them? Will they have the skills needed? Can they be counted on? Finally, many leaders of human service agencies have backgrounds in helping professions and little preparation for management. Many of the management decisions that they have to make may seem ambiguous simply because they have not yet had opportunities to develop the tacit knowledge that would guide them in running the organization.

This study's sample of human service administrators viewed "Time Pressure" and "Uncertain or Limited Resources" as by far the strongest challenges that they faced. These challenges are more likely to be constant parts of the human service world than the lowest-rated challenges: "Lack of Knowledge" or "Experience and Clashes with the Board". These two are more specific, and they may occur for most administrators at some point, but are not as likely to be ongoing.

Human service administrators appear to share a number of challenges with their counterparts in other sectors. These shared challenges include time pressures, directing and motivating staff, lack of knowledge, and improving an organization's performance. However, it was hypothesized that some of the challenges might appear to stem from the unique features of the nonprofit sector. Table#3 summarizes these links.

Variations Across Agencies

The strength that a particular challenge has for an administrator depends in part on characteristics of his or her agency. Those in public agencies are challenged by volunteer involvement, which is not surprising, since volunteers are less likely to be attracted to these agencies, and their boards are generally appointed by the government rather than being made up of recruited volunteers. Younger agencies experience more resource challenges, both in funding and in volunteers, than do more established agencies. This finding, too, is not surprising, since older agencies are more likely to have developed relationships with volunteers and funders, built up a revenue base, and established a committed board that takes on major fund-raising responsibilities.

Table #3		
Links Between Features of Nonprofit Organizations and Leader's Challenges		
Feature	*Conditions Created*	*Leader's Challenges*
Mission	*Broad range of constituents; multiple objectives; value-laden conflicts; client needs that outstrip resources*	*Building outside support and understanding; resolving problems with clients and external groups; creating a supportive working environment*
Governance	*Board role ambiguity; lay-professional value differences; importance to agency of board's support*	*Establishing clear expectations; creating positive relations with board; facilitating solutions to conflicts*
Funding	*Lack of access to capital; dependence on mixture of non-market sources of funds; funders with differing values and goals*	*Working with limited and uncertain resources; resolving problems with resource contributors; reconciling diverse demands*
Volunteers	*Major contributors who control own terms of work; reliance on non-monetary rewards; flux in organizational membership*	*Recruiting, motivating, and retaining volunteers*

Although the directors of larger agencies have fewer problems with volunteer involvement than the directors of smaller agencies, they are more challenged by the need to build support for change, the task of leading their staff,

and problems with stakeholders. Larger organizations lose some of their flexibility and the number of staff members and other stakeholders requires increased resourcefulness. Large organizations are also more visible, which may cause conflict with outside groups. Agencies that have a more varied mix of funding sources also tend to have more problems with external groups.

Interestingly, having larger boards is associated with less challenge from the need to build support outside the agency and from time pressures. It is likely that a reciprocal effect is taking place: More board members can create larger support in the community, and well-supported agencies find it easier to attract more board members. More active board members may also ease an agency director's work load and decrease the pressures of time constraints by fund-raising, representing the agency at special functions, making presentations, and raising public awareness.

Some challenges appear to be more independent of the organizational characteristics examined. "Lack of Supportive Work Environment" and "Clashes with the Board" in particular were not related to agency characteristics. These challenges are perhaps as likely to occur in one type of agency as they are in another.

Variations Across Leaders

The administrator's individual characteristics are also related to the degree of challenge experienced. In general, perceptions of challenge decrease with age and level of education. Male-female differences were found in only one challenge: volunteer involvement. It is likely that this is due to the tendency of women to manage smaller agencies, which are more apt to report problems attracting committed volunteers. Smaller organizations are also more likely to be managed by less experienced managers, which may help in explaining why managers with fewer years of experience report less conflict with outside groups and more problems with volunteer involvement—the same pattern of challenges associated with smaller agencies.

Interestingly, administrators who have had work experience outside the nonprofit sector report fewer challenges, particularly on the dimensions related to moving their organizations forward and to problems with clients and external groups. Diverse experiences may give these administrators more opportunities to learn how to handle these challenges. Also, administrators who serve on the board of another agency experience less conflict with their own board. Experience in the

other role may help them to develop an understanding of how to handle the board effectively. Why administrators who have had mentors would be more challenged by time pressures and clashed with the board is not clear.

Conclusion and Policy implications

It may be concluded on the basis of the foregoing discussion that developing leaders who can meet the challenges inherent in the human service administrator's job is an important endeavor. Developing economies like Bangladesh have become increasingly dependent on the nonprofit sector to fulfill important social functions (Desruisseaux, 1985). Nonprofit organizations serve developing nations' [including Bangladesh] education system, social services, health care, public advocacy, art, and cultural needs (Firstenberg, 1986). Moreover, human service leaders need to be prepared so that their agencies may thrive during the tougher times that they are now facing: diminished government funding, cutbacks in government-sponsored social programs, and private donations that have not been able to make up for the discrepancy. Given these conditions and considering the rapid growth rate of human service agencies, effective leadership is essential for the efficiency and success of these agencies.

Looking at the leadership challenges of human service administrators, directors would hopefully gain insights into the kinds of leadership development programs that are needed. There may be at least five areas that leadership development programs for these directors could usefully address:

1. *Moving an organization forward in its mission.* The broad, value-laden missions of most human service agencies quickly lead to a multiplicity of goals and cause internal conflicts about goal priorities. To keep the organization focused, a director needs to learn how to develop systems for the monitoring of client needs and opportunities for new programs, how to evaluate the contribution that goals can make to the overall mission of the organization, how to work with staff and board to decide which goals to pursue, and how to articulate those goals to individuals and groups outside the agency. The directors could also put to use models and frameworks for analyzing their organization—its strengths, needs, performance, and culture. The results of these analyses would often suggest needed changes in structure, processes, or direction. The directors thus need to learn how to instigate and facilitate change in the organization.

2.   *Building relationships that will foster support for the organization.* The directors are often the linchpin that holds together the various groups that contribute to the agency. The board, volunteers, employed staff, clients, external groups, community leaders, and the public represent distinct challenges. Good interpersonal skills are not the only factors in the development of productive relations with this wide variety of stakeholders. Awareness of the varying needs and concerns of these stakeholder groups and knowledge of how to best persuade and gain their confidence are important. The confidence that staff have in a director may be built on his or her style of delegating service delivery decisions to the professional staff, while the confidence of a board may be based on the director's expertise and history of keeping the agency in good financial shape. A government regulatory agency may be most impressed by close attention to detail, while a foundation needs to see innovative new ideas for attacking social problems.

3.   *Gaining and using resources in creative and innovative ways.* The limited access to capital is one constraint of the nonprofit sector. The human service administrator must find creative ways of working within these constraints. Certainly, fund-raising strategies and techniques can be taught. But a leader in this sector needs to know how to unleash the creative potential of the staff and volunteers and how to use people constructively in solving resource issues.

4.   *Coping with stress and conflict.* Time pressures, unmet client needs, disagreements with the board, funders with incompatible requests—these aspects of managing a human service agency are not likely to disappear. To prevent personal burnout, the administrator will have to develop strategies for coping with these pressures. Special emphasis might be placed on conflict resolution strategies, on sources of peer support, and on learning how to depersonalize problems.

5.   *Seeking out learning opportunities.* The human service directors whom the researchers interviewed did not seem to spend much time in planning their personal or professional development, and a number of those whom they surveyed said that this was an area in which they were in much need of help. Coursework is, of course, one option, but human service administrators need to explore other learning strategies as well. Structured ways of obtaining feedback about strengths and weaknesses as a leader and manager from staff and board members are powerful means of learning

about one's impact on others. Experiences, such as serving on the board of another agency or working for some time in another sector, may provide learning opportunities that help administrators to broaden their knowledge and perspectives. Peer advisers and coaches from other agencies could also be used for developmental purposes. Training programs for human service administrators need to indicate how coursework can be complemented and reinforced by naturally occurring learning events.

These five areas—moving the organization forward in its mission, building relationships that foster support for the organization, gaining and using resources in creative and innovative ways, coping with stress and conflict, and seeking out learning opportunities—are not unique to human service administrators. How, then, to develop a special program for these administrators? The present researchers do not feel that it is absolutely necessary to tailor a program for them; a program that addresses these areas in relatively general terms could be useful. However, one may argue, as others (Rawls, Ullrich, and Nelson, 1975; Newman and Wallender, 1978; Heimovics and Herman, 1989) have, that a special program could have more impact because it would explore these topics in the context of the special values and constraints that are found in the nonprofit sector and because it would foster the linking of classroom learning with real issues in the agency.

For example, coursework in a tailored program focused on the development of organizational goals should recognize the value-laden missions of human service organizations that lead to tough choices about programs in which to invest. There are always more worthy causes than there are resources. The need to have wide participation, both inside and outside the organization, in the setting of goals, the need to think simultaneously about what benefits clients can get and what can be sold to funders, and the lack of bottom-line measures of progress on many goals are constraints that models of goal setting could incorporate when these models are applied to nonprofit organizations.

Another example can be seen in training aimed at building productive relationships. Such training for human service administrators should recognize the importance of the board-director relationship. The special problems of leading a group of loosely linked individuals to whom one reports are likely to have more interest and importance for nonprofit managers than they will have for those in other settings.

A final note about leadership development for nonprofit agencies. This research study shows that not all human service administrators are alike. They may vary a great deal in their primary leadership challenges. So even when programs have been tailored for them, human service administrators do not all confront the same issues and problems. Every attempt is required to be made to get them to think about links between the models, concepts, and ideas presented and the situation back home. Encouraging participants in such training to verbalize their major challenges early in the program and giving them tools that will stimulate their thinking about how to apply what they have learned are starting points. Matching directors with similar challenges to share learnings during the programs and having them use their real-life problems in exercises and cases would also be valuable. Although people often make generalizations about the characteristics of human service agencies, they should realize how diverse the agencies and their administrators can be.

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