

# Distinguishing Losers and Winners Beyond COVID-19

Many organizations worldwide are in some leadership and management dilemma with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa, like many other continents has also been adversely affected. The current situation, therefore, calls for a paradigm shift in the way leadership and management issues are handled and addressed.

## Contextual Overview

It is no doubt that barriers commonly affecting organization leadership and management in Africa have assumed high level of significance by emergence and impact of the Corona Virus 2019 popularly known as **COVID-19** as it has resulted in significant drain on overall viability of both organizations and people across the continent of Africa. While its complete impact and consequence may not fully be perceived, felt nor delineated at this time it is clear that without investing in innovative and strategic solutions, many organizations and people may be exposed to irreparable outcome. This vulnerability is further substantiated by the fact that COVID-19 continues to have direct and indirect impact on operations, core assets including means of implementation for organizations thereby threatening its viability and resilience.

Worse still, in Africa, this challenge has further been exacerbated by inadequate investment in leadership and governance skills sets resulting in historical low levels of strategic leadership capabilities including low management skill sets. Worse still, this has had inhibiting effect on organizational leadership capability to inspire and uptake traction and discernment of opportunities especially in moments of extreme crisis such as COVID-19. This leadership and management gap impair uptake of enablers as vital assets to support necessary transition and cross over from jurisdiction of crisis to that of competitiveness.

This paper discusses three (3) common challenges that have a bearing effect on organization leadership and management effectiveness in Africa, including compounding consequential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on organization in Africa. The paper further observes and discusses potential solutions which LDI avails in support of the need to address barriers, build and empower organization leadership with cutting edge strategic and critical thinking assets and capabilities. It is inspired by the strategic position of LDI as an organization leadership champion that provide array of cutting edge and transformative solutions. Specifically, LDI offers knowledge partnership that empowers Directors, Managers and overall organization leadership of both business and NGOs including Faith Based Organizations (FBO) with aptitude to assume position of a winner and resilience rather than loser.

## Organizational Trials and Tribulations

For a long time now, organizational leadership and management in Africa appear to have remained inadequate resulting in limited success in achieving organizational buoyancy and robustness that is expected to be further accelerated by impacts of COVID-19.

**Firstly**, although it is well known that many organizations in Africa unlike those in other parts of the world, tend to start well but often succumb to challenges and setbacks mainly due to low leadership and management nonresponsive capabilities. To a large extent this can be attributed to inadequate investment in acquisition of leadership cutting edge skills among many organizations in Africa, thereby perpetuating vulnerability. More often than not, this has led to many organizations to experience delivery failure mainly associated with inability to inspire and innovate cutting edge solutions as essential knowledge asset to support organizational viability, robustness and resilience.

Investing in enhanced leadership skills sets and aptitude is necessary to inspire leadership and governance responsive scale and dynamism as organizational asset for addressing challenges that separate position of loss to that of a winner.

**Secondly**, it is a common and necessary standard operating procedure among organizations to identify and mobilize required levels of innovative financing to support achievement of strategic vision and activities and overall organizational growth. With the advent of COVID-19, that has created a setback which is inevitably expected to assume greater dimension as it has presented debilitating effects on the productivity and profitability and wellbeing of organizations and individuals. Without acquiring cutting edge knowledge, skill sets and enhanced leadership competencies, organizations in Africa may remain at the tail end of the global economy.

**Thirdly**, overall organizations in Africa have not invested sufficiently in technological aptitude resulting in inability to assume status of competitiveness and profitability. Worse still, this has further constrained organizational productivity as well as opportunity to harness the global marketplace. Investing in deliberate leadership commitment to mainstream technology uptake within the business ecosystem leapfrogging organizations in Africa is no longer an option but critical requisite to migrate organization from non-performance position to that of choice. Clearly this need has been underpinned and become urgent by prevalence of COVID-19 that in many cases has challenged the traditional organizational delivery architecture. For example, low investment in digital capabilities that has characterized many organizations' in Africa continue to constrain its productivity, competitiveness or indeed leverage to expanded marketplace.

Organizational leadership and strategic management challenges in Africa transcend across a significant number of organizations including Non-profit organizations as evidenced by inability to adapt, transition and assume a status of competitiveness and resilience. Thus, it is no exaggeration to observe that many organisations in Africa remain at the tail end of the winning spectrum.

Addressing these leadership and management barriers invariably remains not only of necessity but of priority. As a leadership and governance organization, LDI identifies with these challenges and offers its leadership cutting edge solutions to contribute its leadership knowledge asset that directly support organizational leadership aptitude in Africa as asset for assuming winning position even during the COVID-19 and beyond, including what has commonly become the new normal. This impacting transformational call to organizational leadership and governance present an opportunity to support strengthening decision making and winning organizational attributes that overcome challenges especially in unprecedented time of crisis. Therefore, by leveraging this knowledge partnership and rallying call to organizational leadership and management aptitude, it will support navigating across the network of uncertainties that threaten the very survival of organizations as well as wellbeing

of people. It thus constitutes a clarion call to contribute to building organizational governance Leadership and management aptitude to support cross over to being winners rather than losers.

### LDI Partnership and New Normal

In support of organizational transformation shift, LDI commits its leadership knowledge asset in building partnerships as practical way to strengthen leadership delivery aptitude of organization in Africa through impacting knowledge building, leadership resources and assets that are premised on the need to address barriers that have persistently constrained success of many organisations in Africa. To this end, LDI presents an opportunity, leverage and enabler through organizational leadership solutions that include among others;

**a) Need for Strategic Direction:** This serves as an important starting point and enabler for distilling critical barriers as a basis for innovative solutions necessary for Executive Directors, Managers or Senior Pastors to domesticate cutting edge decisions for delivering lasting winning impact for organization beyond COVID-19. Important it clarifies pathways for discerning on how to generate intentional screening and engagement by the Strategic Leadership to espouse robust tools for navigating through the storms of COVID-19 into the future with competitiveness.

**b) Need to mobilize resources, stewards and matching delivery capabilities:** Constitute knowledge asset that empowers organizations in stormy times such as COVID-19 including to exhibit the principles of stewardship in addition to mobilization of financial resources as important means of implementation. Without addressing barriers associated with disposition of good stewardship, mobilizing means of implementation and indeed its use in a manner that responds to barriers threatening organizational success and avoid complete erosion that are likely to perpetuate. It is thus of critical importance to domesticate leadership capabilities to support organizations' good stewardship as well as obtain depth on how to translate knowledge and ideas in a discerning manner in order to effectively address not only current but also emerging future financial and capacity needs of their organizations. It is envisaged that the need to identify innovative source of financing and delivery skill sets to support the new normal may delay and impede delivery capacity.

**(c) Need to harness technological innovation:** A strand that equips Directors, Senior Managers, leadership or indeed other management team in a manner that empowers them with distinguished understanding regarding not only the difference between governance and management but importantly suites of innovative technological solutions separate a winning organization from that of a loser. Acquiring strategic leadership understanding to enable and deploy innovative leadership choices remains one of the greatest assets to enhance delivery aptitude and efficacy of organizations in Africa.

### Nexus of Partnership and Distinctiveness

By exposing organizational leadership and management teams to transformational and impacting innovative tools and approaches, this knowledge building empowers organizations with delivering winning solutions and lasting investment as it provides the organization with valuable resources and capabilities of a winner.

This opportunity is part of the transformational knowledge toolbox and dashboard designed to empower organizations' leadership and management infrastructure to gain traction on the following building blocks of winning trajectory;

- Identification of strategic starting point
- Discernment and navigating the change
- Domestication of the New normal
- Opportunities for enablers

## Conclusion

Consistent with the Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) commitment to strengthen the strategic leadership asset of organization in Africa this leadership and governance 'rally call', prioritizes capacity implication as delivery assets that separate losers from winners. It presents innovative knowledge solutions to address leadership barriers that are largely attributed to leadership and governance constraints by instigating innovative solutions. Investing in knowledge assets that empower leadership to address key barriers threatening organizations aptitude remains one of the most desired key to organizational success. As a specialized leadership and governance institution, LDI therefore has prioritized the need to walk with organizations and by it enable organizational leadership and management assets in general to transform challenges into impacting opportunities and enable organizations in Africa to assume status of choice.

Importantly through these tailored interventions, LDI considers it a privilege to walk with organizations across Africa. Birthing winners rather than losers among organizations in Africa is a necessity of urgency in improving not only the organizational returns but overall social-economic and livelihoods of its people.



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