



**ACTION RESEARCH
ROUNDTABLE
RESEARCH
REPORT**

*Examining the Enabling Environment
in Public-Sector Organisations
and Regional Institutions in the Caribbean*

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CHAPTER 1

Summary of the Research

1.1: BACKGROUND

Leadership is an enduring area of focus for all public-sector organisations and regional institutions as they learn to adapt to an increasingly dynamic global context (Ciulla, Knights, Mabey, & Tomkins, 2017). The convergence of compounding factors, including a shrinking global economy, increased security risks, shifting and uncertain geo and socio-political dynamics, along with accelerated technological advancements, has created several internal and external challenges that these institutions must anticipate, and to which they must also respond.

Often perceived as being at a disadvantage in terms of availability of resources and global influence, these institutions must continuously re-define themselves with greater innovation than their global competitors.

For Caribbean leaders, thriving in this increasingly complex context, will require the astute and courageous weaving together of visionary, transformational, and adaptive leadership that will drive these institutions to transcend internal and external barriers, embrace change, foster on-going development, and nurture emergent practice (Campbell, 2018).

The environment that demands this kind of leadership to be practiced is itself a complex system comprising a coalescence of confluent factors. It is a system made-up of beliefs, behaviours, practices, processes, procedures, cultures, and relationships that can both enhance and impede the very leadership effectiveness it requires.

The Caribbean Leadership Project (CLP), while recognising the importance and value of building leadership capacity in the Caribbean through learning and development, has also attached equal importance to

understanding the organisational environments in which Caribbean leaders operate. As a result, in their mandate to build the leadership capacity throughout the Caribbean, they place strong emphasis on the quality of organisational environments in which leaders are expected to excel; these environments must be enabling.

The Enabling Environment is one of the CLP's six leadership pillars. This pillar is based on the principle that the transferability of knowledge hinges on, among other things, an organisation's culture, relationships, policies, and procedures.

Another one of the six pillars, is Research. This pillar promotes evidence-based policy and leadership best practice, driven by empirical data collection and analysis.

Combining the two pillars of the Enabling Environment and Research, in 2016, the CLP commenced its second Action Research Roundtable (ARRT 2), with a specific focus on empirically examining the enabling environment in public-sector organisations and regional institutions across the Caribbean.

1.2: PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The main purpose of the research was to ascertain the extent to which Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions have organisational environments that are engendering transformational leadership. In addition, the research also sought to assist organisations in assessing their environments and developing strategies to create a framework for which they could enable transformational leadership.

1.3: RESEARCH APPROACH

The research strategy used to collect the data was based on the ARRT methodology, which is an applied solution-driven approach to research, principled on the collaborative engagement of experts and practitioners in the public service.

During the first two-day meeting of the ARRT, discussions were held with various senior leaders from public organisations and regional institutions across the Caribbean to ascertain their perspectives on the enabling environment. The meeting was facilitated by the members of the CLP research team which comprised two consultants from Canada, the Regional Project Manager, and a lead researcher.

Each member of the ARRT and CLP team has experience working on issues related to leadership and governance in the Caribbean. Therefore, the primary aims of the session were to:

1. Provide the ARRT 2 members with detailed information on the context of the research being undertaken;
2. Establish each member's role in the project;
3. Discuss the anticipated project outputs;
4. Engage in collaborative discussions on some of the central features of the enabling environment in Caribbean public-sector and regional institutions; and
5. Design and test a research instrument (interview protocol) that would eventually be used to gather the data required for this project.

The discussions on the enabling environment were guided and informed by the Appreciative Inquiry model and Ken Wilber's Integral Theory Quadrants model. These models were used as interpretive frameworks for understanding the nuances of the enabling environment in the public-sector organisations and the regional institutions that participated in this research.

One of the significant points of agreement emerging from these discussions was that the enabling environment for leadership transcends the working environment in which a leader finds him or herself. The consensus

among the ARRT members was that effective leadership starts from within the leader and is based on his or her innate desire to lead.

After the roundtable session, the research team utilised the feedback from members of the ARRT to further delineate the parameters of the study and to develop and refine the research instrument (interview protocol).

This was followed by a virtual session which was held to further discuss the parameters of the research as well as to gain member input on the final interview protocol. During this session, there were areas identified for additional refinement. Once a consensus was reached, the research team began preparations for conducting the research.

The research project was executed in two phases. Each of these phases are described below.

1.4: PHASE 1: THE INTERVIEWS

1.4.1: COLLECTING THE DATA

Having received input from members of the ARRT on areas of refinement, the interview protocol was finalised. It was designed to solicit information from participants of prior circumstances in which they were required to demonstrate confident and courageous leadership. The participants were asked to provide an authentic example of a challenging situation which they triumphantly overcame. They were also required to provide details on the psychosocial and organisational systems variables that either provisionally thwarted or contributed to their eventual success. Each interview session lasted for approximately 1hr and 30mins.

Prior to each interview, participants were sent information pertaining to the nature and scope of the project as well as a copy of the interview questions. On agreement to participate, dates and times were set for the interviews to be conducted. Both the research team and members of the Round-table were involved in the data collection process as interviewers.

One-on-one interviews were used to gather the data. Key leadership personnel from public-sector and regional institutions agreed to be interviewed. The final sample comprised fifty (50) senior leaders from 12 countries across the Caribbean; these included:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Antigua and Barbuda | 5. Grenada | 9. Saint Lucia |
| 2. Barbados | 6. Guyana | 10. St. Vincent and the Grenadines |
| 3. Belize | 7. Jamaica | 11. Suriname |
| 4. Dominica | 8. St. Kitts and Nevis | 12. Trinidad and Tobago |

1.4.2: DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data that emerged from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The information was carefully mined and coded to identify common themes emerging from the interviewees.

1.4.3: KEY FINDINGS

The data revealed four major themes pertaining to the enabling environment; each with several sub-elements. Using the Integral Quadrant model as an interpretive framework, the following themes emerged for each of the four quadrants (Internal Experience, Relationships, Behaviours, and Systems) of the model; these included:

1. Fostering and Inspiring Purpose-driven Leadership (Internal Experience);
2. Building Leadership Capacity for Action (Behaviours);
3. Encouraging Collaboration (Relationships); and
4. Supporting the Achievement of Results (Systems).

Each theme is supported by four related actions that Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions need to take if they are going to cultivate the type of environments that are necessary to nurture the practice of transformational leadership. These findings are discussed throughout this paper. Narratives from the interviewees are also incorporated to assist the reader with developing a holistic picture of the experiences of leaders throughout these Caribbean organisations.

The findings that emerged from Phase 1 were used to inform the development of an Organisational Assessment Tool, referred to as the Enabling Environment Indicator (EEI). This tool contained statements (developed using interviewees' responses from Phase 1) that sought to assess the extent to which the organisations in Phase 2 were enabling transformational leadership.

1.5: PHASE 2 : THE IN-COUNTRY PILOTS

1.5.1: COLLECTING THE DATA

Six countries and one regional institution participated in Phase 2 of the research. Each organisation from each country had a pair of designated pilot leads. These pilot leads were required to administer the EEI to leaders within their respective organisations.

The results emerging from the tool were used by the pilot leads to develop pilot-related activities which targeted key areas for improvement required to facilitate transformational leadership in participating organisations.

1.5.2: DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data in this phase was analysed based on specific numeric criteria, which was used to ascertain the extent to which organisations were enabling transformational leadership. Organisations that obtained results between 64-80 were said to be doing very well in enabling transformational leadership. Those that achieved between 52-63 were also doing well, but had one or two areas for improvement. Organisations that received 51 or less were said to be enabling autocratic/transactional leadership.

The organisations were also assessed based on their scores on the sixteen sub-elements assessed by the EEI. The scores could range between a low of 1 and a high of 5. The scores on these various sub-elements were used by the organisations to identify related pilot activities. For example, if an organisation scored 2.1 on Sustaining Leaders' Well-being, they could seek to develop pilot activities based on this sub-element.

1.5.3: KEY FINDINGS

The results revealed that four of the organisations were enabling autocratic/transactional leadership (they scored 51/less). The remaining three were enabling transformational leadership, but there was still significant room for improvement.

Enabling Environment



CHAPTER 2

Introduction

The idea of “enabling” refers to providing an opportunity or possibility for something to exist. In organisations, we are always enabling one thing or another. Recognising the value of a nuanced understanding of the enabling environment for governance throughout the Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions, this research aimed to identify:

1. What leadership styles are practiced within Caribbean public sector and regional institutions;
2. Which of those styles are most present within those organisations;
3. How those styles both shape and are shaped by their environment; and
4. Which styles contribute most to creating healthy and effective public-sector organisations and regional institutions that facilitate best practices in leadership.

A sample of 50 senior leaders (35 females and 15 males) – permanent secretaries/CEOs and other senior leaders from public-sector organisations and regional institutions across 12 Caribbean countries identified as having achieved significant results – participated in an Appreciative Inquiry interview process where their perceptions were explored to identify:

1. What type of leadership they contributed to their organisations throughout their career that led to the results they achieved;
2. What factors already existed within their organisational environment that supported them in achieving results (enabling factors);

3. What factors within their organisational environment put achieving their desired results at risk (disabling factors); and
4. What leadership did they practice to overcome those disabling factors.

During the interviews, participants were asked to recall a situation during their career in which they were required to demonstrate courageous and confident leadership. They were also encouraged to share the factors that contributed to and hindered their ability to achieve results in that situation.

The interviews revealed three styles of leadership that exist within Caribbean public-sector organisations: autocratic, transactional, and transformational.

Autocratic leadership prioritizes a top down, controlling environment and is most needed when the mission of the organisation has a strong, singular focus and when the purpose is to carry out one senior leader's vision.

Transactional leadership focuses on leveraging expertise and is most needed when organising for achievement during steady states.

Transformational leadership encourages team work, team building, motivation and collaboration among employees at different levels of the organisation.

The information provided in this current document is designed to:

1. Give a detailed synopsis of the major findings that emerged from the research;
2. Outline how these findings were used to inform the development and refinement of the Organisational Assessment Tool on the Enabling Environment for Transformational Leaders; and
3. Share the results that emerged from pilot projects within seven organisations as a result of the administration of the tool and subsequent targeted organisational development activities undertaken, based on assessment results.

The present document outlines:

1. The key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the senior leader Appreciative Inquiry interview data;
2. A sample of interviewee responses that lead to the classification of themes;
3. The relationship between the themes and important questions to consider with regards to the enabling environment for transformational leaders in Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions;
4. What Caribbean leaders are currently doing in terms of transformational leadership;
5. The practices and systems that Caribbean leaders believe currently exist to facilitate transformational leadership;
6. The practices and systems that Caribbean leaders believe need to change to create a more enabling environment for transformational leadership, and
7. The organisational assessment tool designed to measure the enabling environment in Caribbean public-sector institutions.



In support of the CLP's commitment to continuous learning, it is proposed that to fully engage with the information presented in this document, the following reflection questions be considered:

1. What are some of your thoughts as you read the interviewees' responses?
2. To what extent do the interviewees' responses and other discussions bear any similarities or differences to issues/concerns you have heard/experienced before?
3. What are some of the other "enablers" that you have experienced that perhaps are not captured in this document?
4. What suggestions do you have for Caribbean organisational environments to become more enabling to leadership practice and development?

In addition to having a full picture of the current leadership practices in the Caribbean, through asking the questions presented above, it is equally as important to consider the rich colonial legacies of each Caribbean country. These legacies are not only seen in the dynamics of the political culture in these countries, but they also continue to influence how leadership in the Caribbean is perceived and, more importantly, how it is practised.

For example, the Westminster model of government still influences the procedures at the centre of government in most Caribbean countries. This model of government and governance also has implications for how public-sector institutions are organised and led.

How we perceive leadership in the Caribbean therefore, cannot be disconnected from this colonial past. To a large extent, the Caribbean colonial legacy continues to have a powerful impact on modern-day leadership. Caribbean leadership is symbiotically connected to this colonial context and cultural milieu. It is within this historical framework that leadership in the Caribbean should be examined and interpreted if we are to have a nuanced understanding and appreciation of the kind of leadership that takes place in this Region.





CHAPTER 3

The Enabling Environment for Leaders

3.1: A TRADITIONAL VIEW OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

To understand what is meant by an enabling environment, we need to begin by looking more closely at the idea of “enabling” and “enablers”. Enabling refers to making something possible. By contrast, “disabling” or “disablers”, encompasses those things, practices or underlying beliefs that thwart or inhibit the possibility of something occurring.

This traditional view of the enabling environment insinuates that conditions need to be “ideal” for leaders to excel (Moussa, McMurray, & Muenjohn, 2018). Perhaps this may be best explained by way of an analogy. Plants need water and sunlight to grow; the absence of these two “conditions” can stagnate or prevent growth. However, when these conditions are present, the plant is nourished and thrives. Most plants are dependent on optimal conditions for growth, development, and survival. Similarly, when we speak about an enabling environment for leadership in Caribbean organisations, we refer to those conditions in an organisational ecosystem that allow for the success of its leaders. This organisational ecosystem includes:

1. Values, feelings and beliefs – who we are;
2. Behaviours – what we do;
3. Relationships – how we interact with one another; and
4. Systems, structures and processes – how we organise our world.

In organisations, enabling environments are vital to success. For example, if we provide backup information technology (IT) support we are enabling consistent IT capacity. If we give employees regular, consistent feedback we are enabling stronger performance.

Enabling environments are also important for making leadership practice possible. They are necessary for increased productivity and creative change; particularly in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) where resources are limited.

3.2: A RE-CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LEADERSHIP

While it is helpful to work in an environment where conditions facilitate rather than impede leadership practice, an equally significant consideration is the fact that work environments will always have challenges. This leads to the question: must organisational environments be “ideal” for Caribbean leaders to excel?

In telling their stories, many of the participants interviewed commented on how they successfully overcame obstacles and roadblocks which were intentionally or unintentionally put in their way. This suggests that the answer to the above question is no; conditions do not always have to be ideal for leaders to effectively practice leadership.

Successful Caribbean leaders are adaptable, agile, flexible, and willing to negotiate. They commit to the process of leading regardless of the nature of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

When it comes to leaders in Caribbean institutions, the results show that there is no fundamental dependency. They forge ahead despite resource constraints. They are driven by their desire to lead. They break down any barriers that may impede results.

This is also true for most successful leaders in general. In fact, many leadership experts state that one of the hallmarks of a great leader is the capacity to generate and excel despite trying circumstances. Kouzes and Posner (2007), for example, point out that leadership is about behaviour, and most successful leaders demonstrate the behaviours required to excel when faced with wicked problems. They will challenge and even change the status quo. The authors indicate that they are five key practices that effective leaders engage in; they:

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart

Effective leaders will demonstrate these behaviours even in tough circumstances. What this means is that an environment can indeed enable leaders, but leaders will find ways to lead regardless of the situation in which they find themselves, including changing the environment. Stated differently, an enabling environment can further strengthen and enable leaders, but effective leaders do not depend on it and will strengthen and change their environment.

An analogy that illustrates this supportive but “not dependent” relationship between leaders and their environment is the process of breathing. As long as we are alive, we breathe. Our environment can certainly enable this. We can make sure there is fresh air in the house, free from harmful chemicals or we can go out into nature regularly, all for the sake of enabling our breathing. However, we will continue to breathe even if the conditions in our environment aren’t enabling it. Even if we are in the worst conditions possible, we will continue to breathe as long as we are still alive.

KEY FINDING: REDEFINING THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

An enabling environment is more than what makes something possible. It starts from within the leader. We found that it was the drive to succeed that caused the leaders in this study to excel. They pushed forward regardless of the disablers. They demonstrated agility, flexibility and, adaptability. The environment did not have to be ideal for them to lead. They always found a way to overcome obstacles that stood in their way.

Caribbean leaders seem to operate in the same way – they lead “in spite of”. They will do so in almost any environment. However, if we want leaders in the Region to function optimally and help our organisations reach their fullest potential, we need to provide them with an environment that supports them in practicing leadership to their fullest potential.

3.3: AN UPDATED VIEW OF THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LEADERSHIP IN CARIBBEAN INSTITUTIONS

As can be gleaned from the above discussion, leaders are more likely to thrive when the environment makes it possible. More importantly, leaders need to bring an inner drive that compels them to succeed above all odds. This drive must be characterised by their adaptability, flexibility, tenacity, and persistence. In fact, when ideal conditions are not there, the most effective leaders will create, as much as possible, the ways and means of producing results and getting things done. The enabling environment, therefore, is not exclusive or merely external to the leader; it starts from within. It is the drive to succeed that increases the possibility of something occurring. An environment which is supportive of this drive, fortifies the likelihood of the leader’s success.

3.4: CARIBBEAN LEADERSHIP AND THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

To fully understand the type of leadership that is needed in Caribbean institutions, we need to have a clear picture of the current and emerging trends that these institutions face.

The convergence of compounding factors, including an ever-evolving global economy, increased security risks, shifting and uncertain geo- and socio-political dynamics, along with accelerated technological advancements, has created a myriad of internal and external challenges that they must anticipate, and to which they must respond (La Gurre & Bissessar, 2009).

Often perceived as being at a disadvantage in terms of the availability of resources and global influence, these institutions must continuously re-define and promote themselves differently and with greater innovation than their global partners or face the threat of challenges to their relevance and effectiveness (Palmer, 2009).

The success of these institutions in this increasingly complex context will require the astute and courageous, visionary, and transformational leadership needed to transcend internal and external barriers, embrace change, foster on-going development, and nurture emergent practice.

3.5: WHAT TYPE OF LEADERS SHOULD CARIBBEAN ORGANISATIONS BE ENABLING IN THIS CURRENT ENVIRONMENT?

Given the unabated issues caused by the constant and unpredictable shifts in regional and global economies, the question for Caribbean organisations is: what style of leadership do we need to meet our strategic directives and be the type of countries we envision?

This is a question of alignment and speaks to the need for congruity among three factors:

1. The changing context/environment in the Caribbean;
2. The strategic directives of public-sector and regional institutions considering this context; and
3. The type of leaders the Caribbean wishes to enable given the first two.

More is said about the style of leadership that is required in the next section.



CHAPTER 4

Enabling Transformational Leaders

4.1: LEADERSHIP CONDITIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Leaders in the Caribbean face a wide range of game-changing challenges:

- Most Caribbean institutions are faced with issues pertaining to financial and human capital;
- More resources are needed to facilitate the implementation of policy and to accomplish strategic directives; and
- Continuous downgrades from international rating agencies and the withdrawal of investors from various countries make other problems even more complex.

In these trying circumstances, a distinctive type of leadership is required to drive the Caribbean forward.

4.2: THE CALL FOR RENEWED LEADERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN

The myriad obstacles faced by Caribbean regional and public-sector institutions have resulted in a renewed call for those who can lead during times of change. This is evidenced by several initiatives that have brought attention to the need to strengthen the style of leadership practiced throughout the Region. These initiatives were designed to build leadership capacity in the Caribbean. For example, the Caribbean Leadership Project (CLP) and the Caribbean Centre for Administration Development (CARICAD) have not only spearheaded calls

for public-sector reform but have also designed various learning and organisational development initiatives and resources to facilitate improvement in leadership across the Caribbean.

For instance, the articles in the CARICAD Public Service Charter speak to the importance of sound leadership practice throughout the Caribbean's public-sector. Issues of integrity, accountability, transparency, and capacity building are highlighted throughout the Charter. The articles suggest that, not only should Caribbean public-sector environments be enabling the practice of sound leadership, but that leaders should also possess, and be driven by certain innate qualities that reflect the best standards in leadership practice.

Moreover, the CLP, the brainchild of the late Sir K. Dwight Venner, has also developed several initiatives designed to improve leadership throughout the Caribbean. On launching this initiative, the Canadian Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, stated that the project will help the Caribbean develop a new generation of leaders. The focus of the CLP is shaping leaders and honing their skills so that they become better practitioners in all areas of leadership.

An important point to note here is that the Caribbean requires transformational leaders, and both the CLP and CARICAD have taken great steps in reinforcing and promoting this need.

4.3: HOW DO WE ENABLE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS?

In their book *Integral Leadership, The Next Half Step*, Forman and Ross (2013) point out that there are three frequently seen environments that enable three different leadership styles. These include: autocratic leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership.

An environment that enables autocratic leaders is highly control oriented. Decision making is done primarily at the top and there is a clear hierarchy and chain of command, and communication is top down. In this environment, employees are expected to work within clear guidelines, rules, and routines.

An environment that enables transactional leaders, emphasises expertise and the accumulation of knowledge usually associated with academic qualifications. The emphasis is on formal logic, analysis and empiricism which lead to relationships that are task-oriented and impersonal. Emotions and dialogue are often treated as a waste of time and dismissed as “touchy feely.” Structures tend to be highly bureaucratic and status oriented.

An environment that enables transformational leaders focuses on team work, team building, motivation and collaboration among employees at different levels of the organisation. Opportunities for personal and professional growth are offered to each employee who is encouraged to seek higher performance levels. Processes and conventional ways of operating are challenged if they are no longer effective and a shared vision is communicated throughout the organisation. The environment is one in which team work and high performance are valued both at the individual and organisational levels.

The transformational environment is the type most needed in times of meaningful change where the emphasis is on drawing on the collective talents, ingenuity, and creativity of everyone in the organisation to produce and sustain change. (Ghasabeh, Reaiche, & Soosay, 2015). This is the type of leadership that is desired and needed in Caribbean institutions.

The call for transformational leadership in Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions is becoming louder. For example, CARICAD, in its Implementation Guide, points to the need for transformational leaders. It describes this type of leader as:

A leader that goes beyond managing day-to-day operations and crafts strategies for taking the organisation, department or work team to the next level of performance and success. Transformational leadership styles focus on team-building, motivation and collaboration with employees at different levels of an organisation to accomplish change for the better. Transformational leaders set goals and incentives to push their subordinates to higher performance levels, while providing opportunities for personal and professional growth for each employee.

To enable the type of leader/leadership described above, Caribbean institutions (both regional and public) will need to establish the organisational environments that facilitate effective leadership. They need to facilitate leadership by inspiring leaders at all levels, building leadership capacity, encouraging collaboration, and supporting the achievement of results rather than “fighting the system.” In other words, these types of environments will empower leaders rather than stifle them. It is in these types of environments that Caribbean leaders are more likely to excel and aid the organisation and its people in reaching their fullest potential.

For Caribbean public-sector institutions to create these type of environments, a re-conceptualisation of how the Caribbean sees leadership and the role of its leaders will be required. This re-conceptualisation should also lead to a change in how leadership is practiced. This will necessitate continuous professional development and knowledge of current trends in leadership.

Given that organisations are made up of people, of equal importance to the organisational environment is the type of leaders that are leading the organisations. As was discussed previously, the success of a leader is not solely determined by the organisational environment in which he or she operates. It is also shaped and influenced by the leader. That is, there are certain dispositions that leaders possess that will influence their success.

Governmental organisations and regional institutions in the Caribbean should be shaping these dispositions and seeking out people/leaders who possess these qualities. People who do not see obstacles but see opportunities and do what is required to overcome any challenges and change the system to align with what is needed. These are the type of leaders who enable themselves when everything else around them seems to be disabling.

4.4: THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AND THE INTEGRAL QUADRANT MODEL

Ken Wilber’s Integral Quadrant Model states that every environment is made up of four distinct domains:

1. Values, feelings and beliefs – who we are;
2. Behaviours – what we do;
3. Relationships – how we interact with one another; and
4. Systems, structures and processes – how we organise our world.

To create an enabling environment for public- sector leaders and regional institutions, aligned with the Caribbean’s strategic imperatives, these institutions will need to introduce enabling activities in each of the four domains identified above. This will not only allow leaders to feel more comfortable in their roles, but it also increases the possibility of having them obtain or maintain the buy-in of the people they lead.

This position is supported by the findings that emerged from the interviews with senior leaders in the Caribbean. The results speak to the importance of creating a culture of change in the Caribbean where leadership is concerned. The need to embrace this change and support the type of leadership that the Caribbean requires was prominent among the responses from the interviewees. The following section provides a more detailed analysis of these findings.

KEY FINDING: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS IN THE REGION

Leaders in the Caribbean public-sector display many of the qualities associated with transformational leadership. These types of leaders are visionary, strategic, persistent, and tenacious. They broke down barriers and “swam against the tide” to accomplish their vision for their organisations. However, the research also demonstrated that the environments that these leaders operate in need to do more to enable and strengthen this type of leadership.



CHAPTER 5

Phase 1: Thematic Findings Emerging from the Research

To gain deeper insight into the nuances associated with the enabling environment for Caribbean leaders, 50 senior leaders from a range of public-sector organisations and regional institutions were interviewed using the Appreciative Inquiry model. They were asked to share their stories about what enabled and disabled their leadership in their organisational environments.

Several interesting findings emerged from the interviewees' responses that led to the emergence of four major themes and sixteen sub-themes pertaining to the enabling environment and leadership in Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions. Using the Integral Model Framework as a lens, the four major themes that emerged were:

1. Fostering and inspiring purpose-driven leadership;
2. Building leadership capacity for action;
3. Encouraging Collaboration; and,
4. Supporting the achievement of results.

Each theme represents the areas that regional organisations and public-sector institutions should strengthen and support if they are going to enable transformational leaders. These themes are discussed below in conjunction with their related sub-themes. Narratives from the interviewee responses are also included to provide a nuanced picture of the interviewees' perspectives.

5.1: FOSTERING AND INSPIRING PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

Our findings showed that Caribbean leaders are not neutral. They come into organisations driven by an unrelenting commitment to their purpose and personal values. This purpose calls on them to recognise when something is missing and compels them to take action to rectify the situation.

The research findings, as reflected by comments made by participants, suggest that an enabling environment in Caribbean institutions will foster and inspire purpose-driven leadership by:

1. Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism and integrity on the part of all leaders;
2. Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders;
3. Encouraging self-awareness and personal growth in its leaders; and
4. Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes.

5.1.1: DEMONSTRATING EXEMPLARY ETHICAL PRACTICES, PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY ON THE PART OF ALL LEADERS

A common issue mentioned by the research participants was the importance of practicing high levels of integrity for effective leadership. For example, when asked what motivated them to engage as a leader initially, two participants stated:

“A sense of fair play and a willingness to see transparency and a desire to see the public service rules applied and everyone given a level playing field.”

And:

“When you are professional and a performer, and you know you didn’t get your job based on favours, you have to maintain a professional image, it motivates you to do the right thing and maintain integrity.”

The importance of integrity and professionalism was also strongly put forward in the following response:

“You could not be afraid, you have to act with integrity. . . this is based on what you say and do. You have to know your job. You cannot give the impression that you can be manipulated.”

Such sentiments highlight the importance of having an organisational system where professionalism and integrity are encouraged and enforced. These were the practices that participants considered as enabling.

In contrast, participants also pointed to some of the inhibiting/disabling factors that sometimes breached or thwarted professionalism and integrity. This was particularly evident when they provided their responses to the question on the obstacles that they faced in executing their leadership. Political interference, for example was considered as one of these obstacles. According to one participant:

“Politicians always have constituents and friends in the ministries, and persons are always seeking to use political mileage to get promotions, even when they are not qualified. This is problematic as it undermines the professionalism of the public service. Once a public officer knows that they can run to the politician, you cannot supervise them again.”

A similar point was made by another interviewee, who noted that:

“There was political interference. Power was centralised very quickly.”

The interviewees also shared situations where people intentionally put road blocks to impede the progress of others, as can be gleaned from the response below:

“There was collusion among senior managers when it suited them. There were instances of people burying information. There was an unwillingness to change the way they saw and did things, this was an obstacle that I would have to overcome. People who were in leadership positions were not ready to lead.”

Occurrences such as those identified in the quotation shared above, suggest that standards of accountability and codes of ethics and conduct need to be enforced to create a more professional climate among senior professionals in Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions. When people are held accountable for their actions and inactions (especially at the most senior levels), it goes a long way in creating an organisational culture that is driven by integrity (Hall, 2011). It also provides the foundation that is necessary for ethical leadership.

In addition to providing and promoting ethical standards and professionalism, it was evident from the findings that Caribbean leaders also need to be provided with meaningful challenges to stimulate growth and foster purpose-driven leadership.

5.1.2: PROVIDING MEANINGFUL CHALLENGES TO LEADERS

Organisations are sometimes faced with several challenging circumstances; some of which are unavoidable. These challenges, while difficult, also provide opportunities for leaders' growth and development. The required focus might be more about making sure that leaders are stretched through the right challenges for their development.

For some Caribbean leaders, consideration should be given to providing them with complex assignments that “stretch” them to solve complex problems. This includes placing them in situations that disrupt their habitual ways of thinking and functioning. They could also require the leader to work with new groups, particularly those with different agendas and concerns.

The above view is corroborated by responses provided by interviewees. One interviewee, when asked what encourages him to step up as a leader in tough situations, responded by saying:

“I like challenges, I wanted to overcome it and I wanted to feel proud of myself. I can do it, it is necessary, and I have to get it done, this is what I told myself.”

Another respondent, pointed to the importance of stretch assignments in driving their professional growth and personal development. The respondent noted that:

“Stretch assignments – these really helped me hone my skills and I got a number of these in the foreign service, mentoring, better leadership orientation.”

Providing meaningful challenges also requires that senior leaders demonstrate belief and confidence in other leaders who may function in a subordinate capacity. This means giving individuals the opportunity to lead and not making judgements about their ability to lead based on unrelated factors (e.g. age and gender). Unfortunately, many of the respondents reported that they had experiences that fell into this latter category.

Some of them commented that their opportunities to lead were limited because of their age, experience, or gender.

Experiences such as the one below seemed to be common.

“[My] immediate supervisor felt [I] was an upstart, less than six months in the public service. You had not proved yourself, how do you want to make changes. This has been working so why do you want to change it.”

A similar experience was also shared by another participant:

“The older persons had a challenge with me being a young person, leading them. ‘You are right out of school, what would you know?’ I was so appalled by that comment. I did not see that coming. He was older and very experienced. Had issues with taking orders from a young girl out of school.”

Opportunities for professional growth and development is an important aspect of fostering purpose-driven leadership. In the Caribbean, the challenge of scarce resources can also be seen as an opportunity to enable leaders to develop innovative strategies to resolve the issues that they face (Grandy & Sliwa, 2015). This will also require them to be self-aware and mindful of their leadership practice.

5.1.3: ENCOURAGING SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

For most senior leaders to model transformational leadership, they need to engage in activities which allow them to participate in their own vertical development. Vertical development refers to those activities that challenge your habitual thinking patterns. It allows the leader to develop greater awareness of limiting patterns, beliefs, conceptual frameworks, and provides innovative ways of thinking and reflecting (Gosteva, 2016). This type of activity can be facilitated through peer coaching which, Bill Torbert, a leadership expert, argues is one of the most useful ways to enable leaders to develop breakthroughs.

This is done through collaborative engagement and exposure to diverse perspectives on work-related issues. The focus is not on traditional problem-solving but on a process, that challenges our current paradigms, supports experimentation with new and more expansive ones and leads to more strategic perspectives and approaches.

The research findings showed that Caribbean leaders value the type of learning supported by a reflection process. They also pointed to the importance of the leaders having self-awareness, especially in challenging situations. The interviewees considered both self-awareness and reflection as stepping stones to personal growth and development for themselves and others.

When asked about the type of environment that needs to be provided for Caribbean public-sector leaders and leaders of regional institutions to thrive, many of the participants pointed to factors such as freedom of thought, reflection, and being self-aware. Below is an example of a response that reflects this viewpoint:

“People need space to be who they are and reflect on that to develop their skills and contribute to organisational development. Leading by example and learning by doing is essential.”

Other participants highlighted the importance of being mindful of the processes that they engage in, and taking the time needed to thoroughly think things through. For example, one individual in sharing her experience commented that:

“I knew I could no longer just push at 100 miles an hour. I had to stop and reflect on who am I going to be? I began to turn more of my attention to myself. This was a good move for me in that most things are too complex to be handled in a simple A to B to C way and that had been my way.”

This type of reflective thought and self-awareness is important. It provides the “inner environment” for growth and development. It is this acute awareness and appreciation of self that is a key to vertical development.

It is therefore important for senior leaders to provide the type of environment that gives their staff enough “space” and support to grow vertically. This point is supported by the following comments from two participants in response to the question about what already existed in their organisation that

enhanced their ability to lead.

“My Director gave me freedom to grow and to explore options.”

And:

“I had some really good bosses that allowed me to grow. I had one that taught me whatever he was doing. He gave me confidence. This boosted my self-confidence.”

It is this type of supportive environment that is needed among senior Caribbean leaders to maximise opportunities for vertical growth, self-reflection, and self-awareness. It can also be viewed as a stepping stone to creating leadership communities.

5.1.4: ENCOURAGING A COHESIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY WITH SHARED PURPOSES

Leadership is not about the individual; it is about people. It involves collaboration and the sharing of ideas that assist with organisational and personal growth. This approach to leadership should be based on unity and cohesiveness. A team approach to resolving challenges is always best. While there is evidence from the current research to suggest that this is practiced among leaders in the Caribbean, the findings also indicate that there is significant room for improvement.

Some participants, in sharing their stories related their concerns about the lack of cohesion among their colleagues.

“There were certainly internal conflicts at the senior management level which also led to lines of alliance being de-marked. People think there were side preferences. That had to be navigated very carefully, because it could have undermined goodwill. There was collusion among senior managers when it suited them. There were instances of people burying information. There was an unwillingness to change the way they saw and did things, this was an obstacle that I would have to overcome. People who were in leadership positions were not ready to lead.”

Comments such as the one above, were common among the respondents. They pointed to strained relationships between ministers and permanent secretaries as well as “push back” from colleagues when they tried to get things done for the betterment of the organisation.

One participant shared an experience with a minister that seemed to belittle his leadership.

“. . .The minister tried to put me down, I got asked who is in charge, he said I could be treated as a secretary. He tried to belittle me, tried to scare me.”

Apart from strained relationships, there were issues pertaining to the absence of a “safe space” where people could feel free to share their ideas without fear of being targeted. Some of the thoughts shared by the interviewees suggest that there is a punitive organisational culture that stifles healthy risk-taking and instead promotes an inherent fear of failure. This point is supported by the following narrative:

“There is a cultural shift that needs to be made. There is a level of bureaucracy; it is almost stifling and this almost merciless punishment of failure. People who usually do this, usually have some sort of clout. . .”

On the flip side, many of the leaders also attributed their success to the support that they received from senior leaders. They pointed out that their willingness and ability to excel were reinforced by the insightful guidance they received from more experienced leaders.

For example, one of the participants, when asked to share her experience on what enhanced her ability to exercise leadership in her situation, indicated that she was heavily impacted by the level of support and confidence she received from her superior in terms of information sharing and development.

From the participants’ responses, it was clear that when this type of support existed, leaders were more

confident and comfortable with their leadership. They were more willing to take risks and share ideas.

Providing a supportive and nurturing environment was a frequent response to the question on what emerging leaders need most from senior leaders. This point is corroborated by the following participant response:

“They definitely need the confidence, support and trust of the senior leaders, where that is absent, there is going to be trouble. If as a new leader you don't have that support, it will impact significantly on your efforts to advance your vision for the organisation. The best leader is the best follower. If you don't know how to support and how to follow you can't be a good leader.”

Collectively, the findings emerging under this sub-theme highlight the importance of creating an environment in Caribbean public-sector institutions where upcoming leaders have the support and guidance of more experienced leaders, feel comfortable sharing their ideas, and can rely on others for their support. If this is achieved, it will be a major stepping stone in building the foundation to develop transformational leaders and facilitating this leadership style.

5.2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION

The research findings indicated that Caribbean leaders are “in action”; they have an optimistic, “can-do” attitude, and bring initiative and energy, and step in to make things happen when others step out. Leaders are not always better at doing things. They are better at starting and then sorting out how to do it. An enabling environment in the Caribbean public-sector will build leadership capacity for action by:

1. Developing leadership skills;
2. Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders and the leadership that is present in any job;
3. Sustaining leaders' well-being; and
4. Breaking down barriers to action.

5.2.1: DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leading is inextricably linked to learning. It is a growth process that never ceases. Great leaders are always open and willing to learn, and to share what they have learnt (Lee Abdullah & Varatharajoo, 2017).

Organisations can assist leaders in developing their skills in a variety of ways; this includes providing: a repertoire of leadership tools; opportunities for training and development; mentorship, and regular constructive feedback.

Among the respondents in this research, there was consistent mention of how the application of training they received assisted them with overcoming some of the tough obstacles they faced in leadership. This view was articulated by a respondent, who, when asked about prior life experiences that enabled her to succeed as a leader, pointed to the training that was received under a particular leadership programme.

“The [programme] helped tremendously. I also learned from bad experiences which had put me in emotional ruts. I didn't want to go back to that place.”

Another participant shared a similar experience:

“Over time, I also developed weak leadership skills. I had almost no empathy. With [training], I recognised that people have feelings in the workplace too. [The training] allowed me to adjust my

thinking, that people are human beings. 'Supervisees' felt the brunt of it."

Some of the participants used training as a tool to address skill deficiencies among their staff. The following comment, for example, was made by a participant when asked what obstacles impeded her leadership.

"The team, while committed, lacked some of the critical technical skills required. So, I took steps to encourage their development, both through formal education as well as training and development opportunities."

A mutual concern among the participants was the absence of skills required for some job areas. They reported that this made it a lot more challenging to get things done. In some cases, there were reports of people occupying positions for which they were not suitably qualified.

In addition to formal training and skill development opportunities, quality and constructive feedback was also identified as a useful strategy for strengthening leadership skills and abilities. For some participants, this came in the form of mentorship from more experienced leaders, while others received it from their staff. When these types of constructive dialogues were missing, the interviewees reported that leadership became more challenging.

Based on the foregoing, developing leadership capacity in Caribbean institutions will necessitate an increase in training opportunities provided to leaders. This should be coupled with policies on continuous professional development and mentorship and training programmes designed to provide leaders with experiential learning opportunities that are applicable to their jobs.

This training should be provided at all levels. It will also be important to give opportunities to leaders at different levels in the respective organisations the opportunity to grow and enhance their leadership skills.

5.2.2: BROADENING THE LEADERSHIP BANDWIDTH TO INCLUDE POSITION-BASED LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP THAT IS PRESENT IN ANY JOB

Leadership is not positional. It is not restricted to those who sit at the top. There is leadership occurring at every level, in every job (Kaiser, Craig, Overfield, & Yarborough, 2011). Our research showed that this is especially so in Caribbean public-sector and regional institutions, where the success of the country is based on the success of each public-sector organisation.

Leadership is also about empowerment. It involves giving others the opportunity to lead so that they can hone their leadership skills (Kaiser et al., 2011). The input of all employees should be valued based on its merits, not based on the person's title, education level, political leanings, or full or part-time status.

Unfortunately, the findings from the research revealed that quite a few participants had stories where opportunities to lead were blocked because of age, position, and other discriminatory factors. An example of this is captured in the following response by a former public servant with a wealth of experience.

"We hear, but we do not listen. Young people have a lot to say and we do not listen. In the public service; we do not encourage free thought and we do not accept new ideas. I have seen some young enthusiastic young men come into the civil service but two years later, they have lost their enthusiasm. A lot of senior leaders in the public service are insecure and they feel very threatened."

A more personal experience was shared by another participant when she was asked about the challenges she faced with her leadership. She made reference to people questioning her ability to lead because of her youth and gender.

"The fact that I was . . . a woman, worse a young woman, was an issue. [My job] was seen as

something that guys were good at. What would girls know about it?"

Apart from age and gender, bureaucratic structures and conservatism also seemed to cast a dim light on opportunities to lead. One participant in recalling his experience noted that:

"The authority structure is hierarchical, one had to follow the protocol. Because of that I could not get some things done, as it was opposed. I had to go to the . . . administrators. There was much rigidity. . ."

The findings also suggest that there is an outcry for change in this area. Many of the respondents indicated that emerging leaders need more support from senior leaders. They spoke about the importance of the role that each person plays in the leadership ecosystem. This was summarised succinctly by one of the respondents, who stated that:

"Every person plays an important role. Knowing this helps them through hard times. The organisation is made up of people. Let the people grow and use their ideas. Have the right people at the right place. It's not about a chain of command."

To broaden the bandwidth of leadership in Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions, there must be efforts to re-conceptualise how leadership is seen. It cannot be solely based on the position or title that the person holds. This perspective limits the opportunities for the growth and development of others and makes senior leaders appear indispensable. This myopic view of leadership should be reconsidered especially given the need for the emergence of more transformational leaders in the Caribbean.

5.2.3: SUSTAINING LEADERS' WELL-BEING

Burnout is real! As can be gleaned from the above discussions, working in Caribbean institutions presents leaders with unique challenges. Chief among these challenges is the absence of resources (financial, human and otherwise) required to get the job done.

Sometimes this means that much more time and effort must be spent getting things done. However, if this is not managed well, it can impact negatively on the leader's well-being (Hildenbrand, Sacramento, & Binnewies, 2018).

Several participants spoke about the impact that the frustrations of the job had on them both physically and psychologically. In one or two instances, the stress of the job led to serious health complications. This suggests that greater care and consideration should be taken in managing job-related stress.

People must be valued for their contributions. Appreciation plays an important part in helping people manage job-related stress. If people do not feel valued, they tend to take on stress a bit more. A participant recalled the experience of the impact this had on her.

"I must admit, that at times, I feel depressed. I have helped so many people along the way, and the ingratitude hurt."

The contrast is also true, when people feel valued and appreciated, they are more inclined to handle pressures well and are often more motivated. This point was evident in the response of one of the interviewees (provided below).

"I feel respected by all, there is camaraderie and I feel the motivation coming from the staff. My supervisors expressed gratitude for the work I did."

At the senior level, leaders must show care, appreciation, and concern especially for emerging leaders who need their guidance. This was also a key point that emerged from the findings. As one participant put it:

"The value you place on people or human resources is very important. If love was involved in our day to day operations, half of our problems would be solved. Caring leaders find out if their staff

is okay outside of the office. My staff can attest to the fact that I have done such actions. As a leader, you fail or succeed on the wings of people.”

Sometimes practices, such as this, require leaders to get to know the personality of staff beyond the boundaries of the job. This helps not only in terms of relationship building, but also with keeping the individual afloat in times of distress.

When asked how they remained resilient throughout the setbacks that were presented, some of the participants pointed to the importance of work/life balance.

“I have learned to separate work from me. I always try to achieve work/life balance. I always take my vacation leave. I have good family support. . . “

Another participant highlighted the need to leave work at work.

“I use my home as my sanctuary. I leave work at work. I disengage when I come home.”

Working in Caribbean public-sector and regional institutions can be tough. Leaders face heavy demands and are often expected to achieve goals with limited resources. This must be managed carefully – the workload should be realistic. A healthy work/life balance is important. It is also vital for leaders to support and show appreciation for each other and each other’s role(s). Successes must be celebrated and failures viewed as lessons learnt. These practices can go a long way in helping leaders remain resilient and steadfast.

5.2.4: BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACTION

In leadership, sometimes rules, procedures, and policies “get in the way” of achieving goals; their absence can inhibit leaders. Nonetheless, insightful leaders find innovative and acceptable strategies to bypass barriers that threaten success.

The findings from this research indicate that Caribbean leaders are faced with many obstacles that stagnate the achievement of their goals. Sometimes these obstacles come in the form of people, other times they include the absence of policy or structures that would otherwise facilitate effective leadership.

Being strong leaders, many of the respondents found alternative ways to succeed. This, in some cases, led to the creation of policy, new rules and regulations, and the standardisation of procedures and protocols.

What the findings suggest is that Caribbean institutions need to take a closer look at some of the obstacles that may be impeding transformational leaders/leadership.

A culture of idea-sharing should be promoted to enable leaders to identify those structures or people that are barriers to action. In addition, organisational structures should support and incentivise leaders for engaging in innovative thinking and finding ways and means of success despite the roadblocks. One strategy that can be employed to facilitate this is collaboration.

5.3: ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION

The research findings indicate that Caribbean leaders know they cannot accomplish their goals alone. They find those who can help them, they share information to advance the agenda, and they build teams and mobilise people. An enabling environment in the Caribbean will encourage collaboration by:

1. Enhancing the flow of information;
2. Assisting leaders in establishing informal and formal networks;

3. Promoting team work; and
4. Providing support in mobilising people.

5.3.1: ENHANCING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The interviewee responses indicate that one of the common challenges faced by Caribbean institutions is the flow of information. When people are uninformed, it affects the quality of decisions that are made and prolongs the time it takes to make these decisions. In fact, this was one of the mutual concerns among the participants. They saw the lack of information flow as a major impediment to their leadership.

In sharing their leadership challenges, some participants highlighted an organisational culture where information sharing went against the norm. This point can be gleaned from the comment below.

“There wasn’t a culture of sharing information. They just operated strictly on directives, [and there was] poor communication with staff.”

Another respondent recalled a situation where people intentionally hid information to prevent a change from occurring.

“There were instances of people burying information. There was an unwillingness to change the way they saw and did things, this was an obstacle that I would have to overcome. People who were in leadership positions were not ready to lead.”

In contrast, in organisations where information was willingly shared, leaders appeared to have an easier path to achieving their goals. This was particularly clear in some of the responses to the question on what existed in the organisation that enhanced the participants’ ability to lead. One respondent reinforced the importance of having a senior leader who shares information, by highlighting the fact that she could lead and lead well in the absence of her superior.

“A supervisor who mentors and teaches. She shares all information so that when she is not around, I can address issues and people do not have to wait until her return to office to have a matter addressed.”

The findings in this area suggest that a culture of information-sharing needs to be developed in the public-sector, so that information can flow to all relevant parties. If this is not practiced, the ability and willingness of some leaders to lead will be limited by the absence of information or the difficulty of accessing it.

The findings also reveal that in Caribbean public- sector and regional institutions, information flow will need to improve significantly if they are seriously considering developing a culture of transformational leadership.

5.3.2: ASSISTING LEADERS IN ESTABLISHING INFORMAL AND FORMAL NETWORKS

A key part of leading is networking. Leaders need to have both formal and informal networks that they can rely on (Calvin, 2003). They should also have sounding boards of like-minded people that they can bounce ideas off of in terms of courses of action.

Having these sounding boards allows leaders to “test” possible ideas before implementation. They can also clarify doubts and uncertainty when it comes to decision-making. This point is captured in a participant’s response to the question on how he remains resilient throughout the leadership process.

“By seeking advice from selected experienced persons in the public service and [I] used members of my family as a soundboard for my doubts and solutions.”

In response to the question on relationship building, many of the participants shared their perspectives on the value of having a network that assisted them with their leadership. They valued the ability to be able to call on someone in their network when needed, as was evident in the following response.

“[I leveraged relationships by] creating a network and staying connected with people I met along my leadership journey. Being able to call on them when needed.”

This comment points not only to the importance of having a network, but also to staying connected to the people in that network.

If Caribbean institutions are to enable transformational leaders, barriers to networking must be removed. A collegial environment should be encouraged where people work together to achieve common goals. Relationships need to be strong enough so that healthy competition is encouraged for the betterment of the organisation. There should also be an openness to engage in cross-departmental discussions and barriers to horizontal dialogue should be removed.

5.3.3: PROMOTING TEAMWORK

An important part of leadership is the ability to bring people together so that they can work collaboratively towards a common goal. Teamwork is at the heart of leadership (Calvin, 2003; Lacerenza, Marlow, Tannenbaum & Salas, 2018).

Leadership is not only about the individual that leads, but it is also about how that individual leads people. Getting people to work together is of paramount importance.

In sharing their stories, the leaders interviewed emphasised the importance of collaboration and teamwork to adequately resolving problems. This view was held by a few interviewees. This position can be inferred from this response.

“I had to keep stressing the value of teamwork; it was not a one man show.”

The previous comment supports the importance of having each member of the team understand his or her role in the achievement of organisational goals.

Equally important to the understanding of roles is the issue of trust. In facilitating teamwork, establishing trust among members of the team is always an integral factor (Yang, 2016). A few of the participants indicated that when there were trust-related issues it became even more challenging to lead. As one person, put it:

“I had to build trust and get the PSs [Permanent Secretaries] to also build trust. Felt it simply had to be done.”

Participants also commented on the successes they had when using a team approach to problem-solving. For example, when asked how the organisational environment changed because of their leadership, one of them mentioned that:

“There is a spirit of team work. I think I am lucky because I inherited a professional team. The issue was making them recognise that they are the best of the best.”

Going forward, Caribbean institutions will need to create an environment and organisational culture that engenders a spirit of collaboration.

5.3.4: PROVIDING SUPPORT IN MOBILISING PEOPLE

Leaders are expected to engage people. This helps with the process of mobilising teams and individuals to get on board to assist the organisation with achieving its goals (Lam, Xu, & Chan, 2015).

This requires senior leaders keeping in close contact with their employees apprising them of all

developments that may affect them either directly or indirectly.

Our research findings showed that this was a strategy that leaders in the various public-sector institutions found to be beneficial. As pointed out by a senior official:

“Senior leaders need to keep their ears to the ground. They need to keep on top of what is happening and not live in a glass house. They need to have a complete picture by listening and talking to and being open to people in their organisation.”

A similar point was expressed by another participant, who stated that:

“People may become disengaged from time to time. You must show interest in them. This helps them get through hard times. People need you to respond to their problems. People need to see the role they play in the whole endeavour. Every person plays an important role. Knowing this helps them through hard times. The organisation is made up of people. Let the people grow and use their ideas. Have the right people at the right place. It’s not about a chain of command. We are still too process driven. We need to bring in the people factor more.”

The comments shared by the participants suggest that for Caribbean institutions to be enabling, leaders need to invest time in building and applying skills in: influence, listening, appreciation, difficult conversations and dialogue. They must also deal forcefully with behaviours that impede collaboration (such as gossip, taking things personally, being reactive) and encourage trust and respect.

5.4: SUPPORTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The results from the research also illustrate that Caribbean leaders focus on goals and achieving results. They make things happen that were not going to happen. They find and manage resources to deliver on the priorities of government, improve outcomes and add value. They anticipate, plan, monitor progress, and adjust as needed. They demonstrate and promote stewardship of financial and organisational resources, and they rely on data to make decisions and influence change. An enabling environment will support the achievement of results by:

1. Providing the necessary resources;
2. Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks;
3. Providing structures and accountability; and
4. Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision making.

5.4.1: PROVIDING THE NECESSARY RESOURCES

Leaders need financial and human resources to facilitate their leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Unfortunately, in the Caribbean, limited human and financial resources remain major obstacles to progress and development.

Based on the responses provided by the interviewees, financial constraints seemed to be a common hurdle faced by leaders in the Caribbean. They shared concerns about budgetary constraints that thwarted their ability to execute plans and courses of action.

“We had to try to do things without any money and when we did find ways to do things we had to explain to people how we were able to spend the funds.”

They also expressed dissatisfaction with the human resource capacity; either the absence of human capital or deficiencies in skillsets required to get the job done.

In some instances, concern was raised about the lack of documentation to guide procedures, and what

would otherwise be standard protocols. As one person put it in describing his organisation:

“The missing element was order and organisation in the accounts department. Pilferage, poor documentation and wastage were rampant.”

Apart from this, some interviewees also pointed to the absence of technology or obsolete technologies as a significant challenge to getting things done.

While transformational leaders thrive despite the circumstances or, more specifically, with limited resources, having these resources in place, in the Caribbean public-sector and regional institutions would go a long way in promoting effective leadership. From the stories shared, it was evident that it was through the leaders’ drive and tenacity that they accessed resources that originally appeared to be inaccessible. In some cases, these resources had to be created from scratch.

5.4.2: ESTABLISHING PROCESSES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Leaders operate within an organisational ecosystem. Within that ecosystem, there must be systems, regulations and structures in place that guide the behaviours of employees and leaders alike. When these systems are in place there is also greater accountability.

Some of the leaders we interviewed spoke about the usefulness of regulatory frameworks and the important role that these frameworks played in the decisions that they made. According to one participant:

“Government is all about systems. There were certain laws in place, certain rules and regulations. Those systems made sure that those persons who were going to be dismissed would be those persons who met the criteria.”

Although having regulations in place can be quite facilitative in terms of decision-making; a balance must be struck. That is, regulations should not be overly restrictive so that they prevent the accomplishment of results.

Moreover, findings emerging from the interviews suggest that human resource (HR) policies need to be put in place to ensure transparency in recruitment and selection. One of the participants shared her story of having to create job-descriptions for particular posts and enforcing an HR strategy that was in place for over three years, but never implemented.

Unfortunately, situations like this seem to be quite common among Caribbean institutions, especially as they continue to grapple with standardising processes and procedures to ensure greater efficiency.

5.4.3: PROVIDING STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Structure is important in organisational systems. With clear structures and accountability enforced, it is easier to lead and make decisions efficiently. A respondent, in relaying his experience, indicated that it was the rules and structures that were in place that allowed him to exercise his leadership effectively.

“I think there was a clearly defined set of rules [and structures] whether documented or not. It gave the space for the authority of the leadership to be recognised but for some of the authority to be granted back to the people who lead.”

In the interviews, some participants also indicated that the lack of accountability systems and frameworks were prohibitive to effective leadership. For instance, one noted that:

“There also needs to be a better culture of accountability for our leaders; now we are too dependent on personal accountability.”

Added to this, mention was also made of the fact that, in some circumstances, there appeared to be a

misalignment between the organisational structure and the strategic direction of the organisation. In one instance, a participant highlighted clear discrepancies between the practices of the organisation and its strategic directives.

Going forward, Caribbean institutions will need to ensure that there are clear structures and systems of accountability in place. This will make processes a bit more seamless as these institutions strive to improve their efficiency.

5.4.4: MAKING DATA AND EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO MEASURE PROGRESS AND INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Another major research finding was that one of the primary concerns throughout the Caribbean is the apparent lack of use of data to inform decisions and to monitor and evaluate progress on policies or goals.

The importance of having data to drive decisions in Caribbean institutions was evident in the responses of some interviewees, some of whom viewed this process as necessary for the “right” decisions to be made. This viewpoint was shared by one of the respondents. The person stated that her recommendation for change would not have been accepted had she not had the information or data to support her proposition.

“My suggestion would have been dismissed. I was prepared with information. I did the work, used the bills that were present, and adopted an evidence-based attitude.”

In addition, some leaders also pointed out the need for more efficient database systems where data is centralised and stored for easy access and use, especially when it came to critical decisions.

5.5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Collectively, the results suggest that most Caribbean leaders, in the absence of resources and clear systems and structures of accountability, rely heavily on their inner drive to lead. They have a relentless passion to succeed above all odds.

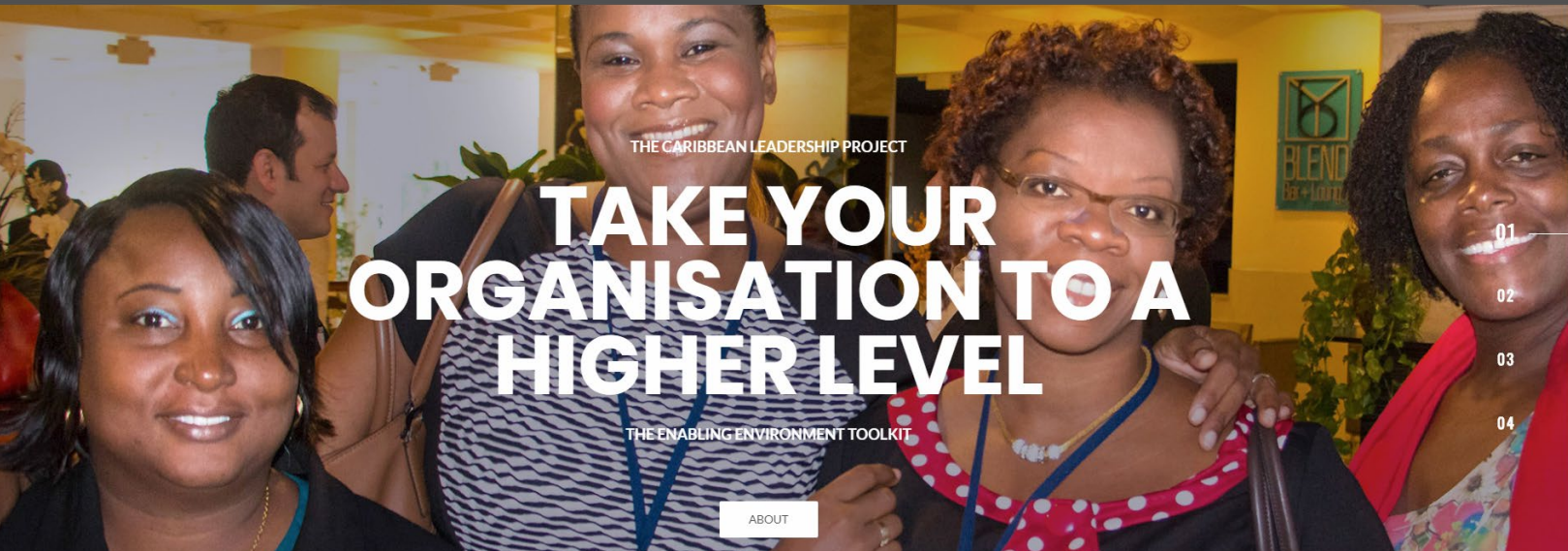
In telling their stories, the leaders we interviewed provided many situations in which they were faced with daunting challenges; however, they also told of their success in overcoming these challenges and overcoming the hurdles that stood in their way.

The findings from the interviews reflected in the leaders’ stories suggests that their leadership was characterised by vision, passion, tenacity, drive, and adaptivity. They had beliefs and principles that drove them to strive to improve their organisations and they allowed nothing to stand in their way of making the changes they saw that were needed. They kept leading despite the fact the conditions were not ideal.

This epitomises what transformational leadership entails. The CARICAD Public Service Charter has reinforced the need for this type of leadership, regarding it as the way forward for the Region.

The Caribbean will benefit tremendously from leaders who are visionary, adaptive, and purpose-driven.

To enable transformational leaders, the organisational environment within the various Caribbean institutions will need to inspire leadership commitment through integrity and ethical practices, continue to build and expand leadership capacity, encourage collaboration and team work and put in place systems and procedures to support the leaders in carrying out their work effectively. Once these processes are in place, the Caribbean will be well on its way to strengthening its leadership capacity.



CHAPTER 6

The Enabling Environment Indicator (EEI) Organisational Assessment Action Tools

As can be gleaned from the preceding discussions, the research showed that transformational leadership is required in Caribbean institutions.

The findings show that if Caribbean institutions are to adapt to the changing global and regional political and socio-economic climates, transformational leadership will be required to drive them forward.

To assist organisations in developing and integrating more transformational leadership into their environments, it is not only important to know the type of leadership required, but also to be able to assess the extent to which it is currently practiced within Caribbean public-sector institutions.

Bearing the foregoing in mind, the findings from this research were used to inform the development of The Enabling Environment Indicator (EEI) Organisational Assessment Action Tools. The EEI is an organisational assessment tool designed to assist leaders in Caribbean public-sector institutions in determining the extent to which their organisation is enabling transformational leadership. The items comprising the EEI were developed using responses provided by the 50 leaders that were interviewed. This approach was taken to ensure that the EEI reflected the realities facing Caribbean leaders who lead in a Caribbean context.

The EEI is designed to assess the practice of transformational leadership in organisations, on 16 dimensions that make-up the four key themes (four dimensions per theme) of an enabling environment for transformational leaders identified through the research:

1. Fostering and Inspiring Purpose-driven leadership;
2. Building Leadership Capacity for Action;
3. Encouraging Collaboration; and
4. Promoting the Achievement of Results.

More specifically, the EEI requires respondents to consider a series of statements and rate the extent to which each statement reflects the practice in their organisation on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This tool will be useful in terms of monitoring the practice of transformational leadership within public-sector institutions in the Caribbean. It provides organisations with the opportunity to measure their current leadership practices and draw conclusions on how the organisational environment helps to facilitate the practice of transformational leadership among its leaders and areas for improvement.

There is also an accompanying Interpretive Report to assist organisations in understanding the results of the assessment and a toolkit that provides practical strategies to develop transformational leadership.

To access the Enabling Environment Toolkit visit www.clptoolkit.org.

CARIBBEAN LEADERSHIP PROJECT
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TOOLKIT

ABOUT ▾ INSPIRE ▾ BUILD ▾ COLLABORATE ▾ RESOURCES ▾ 🔍

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TOOLKIT

Welcome to the *Enabling Environment Toolkit* which provides a wide range of strategies and actions to help take your organisational environment to a higher level in enabling Transformation Leaders.

The *Toolkit* may be used in various ways. If you have completed the Enabling Environment Indicator and received your Interpretive Report you will have identified three key developmental priorities for your organization. From there you may wish to use the *Toolkit* to find those which correspond to these priorities. The *Toolkit* which have been provided may be used to inspire your own ideas or may constitute a starting point for actions you would like to take.

Enabling Environment Toolkit may also be useful to those who haven't done a formal assessment but are looking for ideas on how to better support Transformational Leaders.

The *Enabling Environment Toolkit* comprises the components noted below.

inspire

FOSTER & INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

The tools in this section focus on

- Ethical Practices
- Meaningful Challenges
- Self-Awareness & Personal Growth
- Cohesive Leadership Community

build

BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

The tools in this section focus on

- Leadership Skills
- Position Based Leaders
- Leaders' Well-Being
- Breaking Down Barriers

collaborate

ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

The tools in this section focus on

- Flow of Information
- Informal & Formal Networks
- Mobilising People
- Promoting Teamwork



CHAPTER 7

Phase 2: In-Country Pilots

7.1: INTRODUCTION

Leadership is driven by action. Great leaders are always doing something to inspire themselves and the people they lead. Therefore, the enabling environment is not merely about the “concept” of leadership, it is about leadership in action. The central question in fostering an enabling environment is: “What type of leadership is called for?” This question reflects the adaptive nature of transformational leadership. Different situations often require different leadership approaches. As such, transformational leaders are agile enough to modify their leadership strategies when situations dictate a different approach is needed.

Furthermore, as can be gleaned from the findings discussed in the previous sections, being a transformational leader requires more than just a mere reliance on having the “right” environment to lead. By contrast, transformational leaders create the environment that is needed to propel themselves and others into action. Although transformational leaders create these environments, organisations also need to have structures in place to facilitate this type of leadership. As highlighted in the preceding sections, organisational environments that enable transformational leadership:

1. Foster and inspire purpose-driven leadership;
2. Build leadership capacity for action;
3. Create a culture of collaboration;
4. Support the achievement of results.

The findings emerging from the in-country pilots corroborate this viewpoint. What follows is a discussion of these findings and the activities in the context of the various in-country pilot projects.

7.2: SUMMARY OF IN-COUNTRY PILOT PROJECT PHASE

One of the primary objectives of the ARRT 2 research project, was to develop an assessment tool for various public-sector organisations and regional institutions in the Caribbean. The tool was designed to assess the state of their enabling environments and the extent to which these organisations have an organisational culture and structures that encourage transformational leadership.

To accomplish this objective, it was important for the CLP team to use a participatory research approach to gather the data. Having conducted the interviews in Phase 1 and developed the organisational assessment tool based on the research findings from these interviews, the next step was to pilot the tool. This was done through the administration of the Enabling Environment Indicator (EEI) Organisational Assessment Tool to various organisations throughout the Caribbean.

Six organisations from different countries and one regional institution participated in the in-country pilot projects; the countries included:

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Barbados
3. Grenada
4. Guyana
5. Regional Institution
6. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
7. Trinidad and Tobago

Originally, there were 10 participating countries/institutions, but due to circumstances beyond their control, three of these countries/institutions were unable to continue. The participating pilot organisations were required to use the results that emerged from the EEI to develop initiatives to improve key areas in their selected organisations pertaining to transformational leadership and the enabling environment. More details about this process will be discussed later in this section.

7.2.1: INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE IN-COUNTRY PILOT PROJECTS

The overall goal of the in-country pilot project was to establish a framework for Caribbean public-sector organisations and regional institutions to create enabling environments that foster sustainable and effective leadership practice, especially as it relates to the four criteria required to engender transformational leadership in Caribbean institutions. The intended outcomes of the in-country pilot phase were the following:

1. Providing organisations with a framework for improving their enabling environment for leadership practice and development;
2. Using an Assessment Toolkit to develop/implement improvement plans for the organisation's enabling environments; and
3. Improving the quality of leadership for transformed public and regional services.

7.2.2: RESEARCH PROCESS

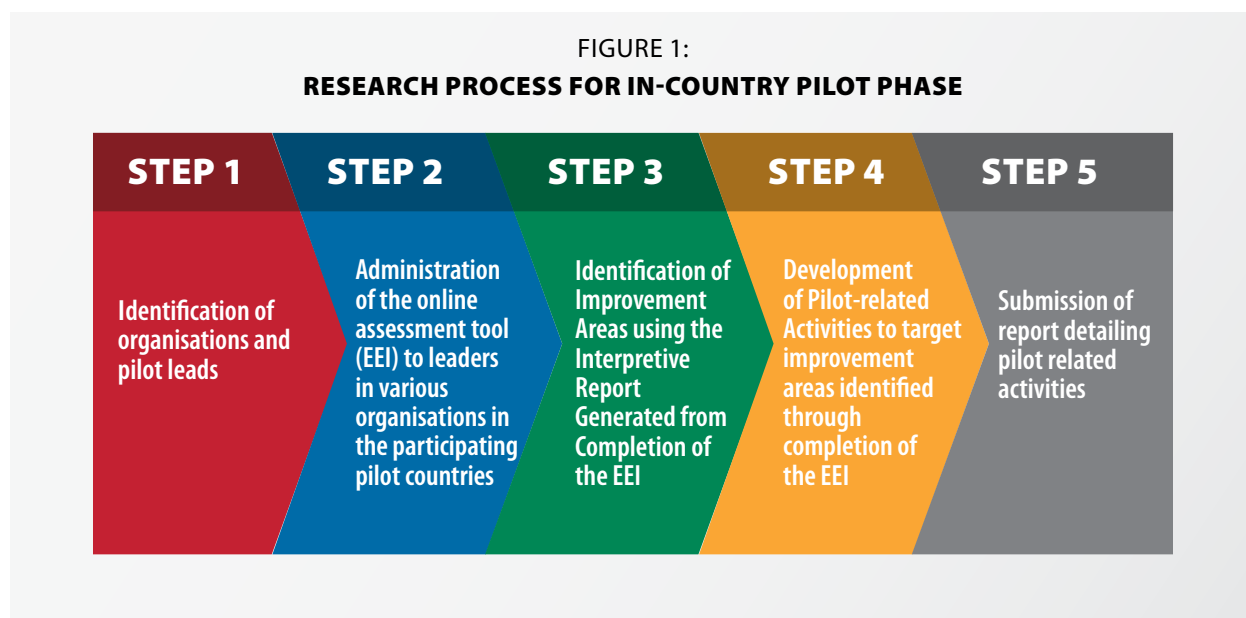
The research process utilised in the in-country pilot phase, followed these steps:

1. The identification of organisations and pilot leads to participate in the piloting process;
2. The administration of the EEI among a sample of six public-sector organisations and one regional institution;

3. An analysis of the results using an Interpretive Report which identified areas of strength and areas for improvement pertaining to transformational leadership for participating organisations;
4. The development of pilot-related activities (spearheaded by pilot leads) designed to target areas identified for improvement; and
5. The submission of a report by the in-country pilot leads detailing pilot-related activities.

Those individuals who were selected as pilot leads were responsible for organising activities which targeted areas considered in need of improvement as reflected in the results from the Interpretive Report.

The following figure captures the research process diagrammatically.



This empirical, data-driven and participatory approach to the research process, facilitated the creation of a research strategy where participating countries could use the results from the EEI Interpretive Report, along with resources and leadership strategies from a leadership toolkit provided to each pilot team, to create the context for meaningful change within their respective organisations.

7.2.3: THE INTERPRETIVE REPORT

After the pilot participants completed the EEI, an Interpretive Report was generated. The report provided a snapshot of the extent to which each organisation was enabling transformational leadership. It included five key components designed to guide the pilot leads in the interpretation of the results. These components/guidelines are provided below:

1. An introduction to the model of the enabling environment for transformational leaders.
2. An explanation on how to interpret their (pilot leads) organisation's results.
3. An overall score for the organisation in providing an enabling environment for transformational leaders and an overview of the organisation's profile of scores on the four key characteristics of this type of environment and the 16 sub-elements.
4. An action plan template to guide the organisation closer to its goal of providing an enabling environment for transformational leadership.
5. An appendix with the list of statements from the EEI.

The type of leadership environment prevalent in the pilot organisations was determined by the responses provided by the participants (senior staff) who completed the EEI in each country. Three key types of leadership environments were assessed; these included:

1. **Autocratic:** this top down, controlling environment is most needed when the mission of the organisation has a strong singular focus and when the purpose is to carry out one senior leader's vision.
2. **Transactional:** the focus in this environment is organising for achievement during steady states.
3. **Transformational:** this is the type of environment most needed in times of significant change where the emphasis is on drawing on the collective talents, ingenuity, and creativity of everyone in the organisation to produce and sustain change.

These classifications of the leadership environment were based on various numeric criteria using the four key areas of transformational leadership. This information is displayed in the following table.

TABLE 1:
SCORING CRITERIA

SCORE	LEADERSHIP STYLE
64-80	Transformational - The organisation is demonstrating clear strengths in all four key characteristics of an enabling environment for Transformational leaders
52-63	Transformational - There are one or two key elements of the Model of the Enabling Environment for Transformational Leaders in which the organisation has clear strengths.
51 or less	Transactional Leaders– Transactional environments expect their leaders to be highly competent standard setters in the organisation. Expertise building is prized. The admiration for those who exhibit a high accumulation of knowledge leads to a desire for the organisational structure to be based on this knowledge. Continuous improvement is rewarded. However, along with this, is a disregard for the human experience in the equation. Autocratic - making is based on the premise that a single best answer or optimal solution exists and can be discovered by the highest-ranking officer. Highly structured plans, procedures, and protocols control everything from product quality to HR decisions.

The pilot leads were asked to use the results from the Interpretive Report to identify target areas for improvement in their organisations based on the four overarching criteria for transformational leadership and their 16 sub-elements. Some of the areas that the organisations chose to target for improvement, included:

1. Sustaining leaders' well-being;
2. Encouraging self-awareness and personal growth;
3. Providing the necessary resources;
4. Developing leadership skills; and
5. Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making.

It is interesting to note that “sustaining leaders’ well-being” was a reoccurring area of focus among the pilot organisations. What this indicates is that issues of burnout, workload, and delegation may be prevalent in these organisations, especially with the absence of resources. A participant from one of the organisations described the nature of his job in this manner:

“We get a lot of work outside of working hours ... one thing I can say is that our workers in [this role] are highly committed ... they go above and beyond the call of duty... they work intensely ... they work very hard.”

The shared areas of strength among the organisations comprised:

1. Having meaningful challenges;
2. Flow of information; and
3. Teamwork.

Each pilot lead was given access to over 60 action tools (included in the Toolkit) that represent leadership best practices and strategies that can be effective within the Caribbean context. The organisations were encouraged to use these action tools to assist with facilitating improvements in the priority leadership areas that they identified from the Interpretive Report.

A series of six virtual meetings and peer-coaching sessions were held over a seven-month period, between September 2017 and March 2018. These meetings and coaching sessions provided the in-country pilot leads with the opportunity to share some of the challenges and successes they experienced with each other and discuss the findings from the Interpretive Report. They were also given guidance and support from the CLP organisational coach throughout the implementation process.

At the end of the project, in March 2018, each pilot lead submitted a comprehensive report that detailed the entire piloting process within their various organisations.

7.2.4: SUMMARY OF PILOT RESULTS FROM THE EEI AND INITIATIVES

As mentioned previously, each pilot lead, guided by the CLP organisational coach, utilised the results provided from the Interpretive Report to identify areas for improvement in their organisations and to develop strategies to facilitate these improvements.

The results indicated that three of the participating countries obtained scores between 52-63, which is indicative of the organisation having strengths in one or two key areas of the transformational leadership model. The remaining four countries, attained scores of 51 or less which reflected the practice of either autocratic or transactional leadership.

Interestingly, none of the pilot organisations attained a score above 53, which suggests that while they may be doing well in terms of enabling transformational leadership, there are still some grey areas that need to be enhanced to produce an environment which lays the foundation for the practice of this type of leadership. The results for each country are displayed in Table 2 on page 35.

It must be noted that the scores provided above are the consummative scores for the four characteristics of environments that enable transformational leadership. Scores for each of the sixteen sub-elements (for each country) are provided in Appendix 2.

With regards to the quadrants, most leaders seemed to be operating within quadrant 1 - fostering and inspiring purpose-driven leadership and quadrant 3 - encouraging collaboration. This finding corroborates the results in the initial phase of the research where the reliance on quadrants 1 and 3 in the absence of resources (reflected in quadrant 4) was identified as a major inhibitor to creating an enabling environment by the research participants who were interviewed.



7.3: PILOT PROJECTS

Many of the pilot leads commented on the accuracy of the results in terms of how reflective they were of their organisations’ leadership practices and other relevant issues. The research findings therefore provided empirical support for anecdotal evidence of the type of leadership that existed in these organisations. They brought to the forefront some of the nagging issues that these organisations face. This created a footprint for meaningful change within these organisations as many of the participants saw the benefit of the pilot activities.

The pilot projects also provided organisations with the opportunity to develop initiatives that would not only improve their organisational processes, but also deepen insights into other issues that their organisations are currently facing. The projects created a platform for the discussion of key issues with senior leadership; thus, moving the pilot organisations one step closer towards the change that is required to support transformational leadership.

The pilot leads, through discussion with their colleagues and senior management, came up with appropriate initiatives to address key issues that were identified through the completion of the organisational assessment tool. Some of the key pilot project activities included:

1. Review and creation of performance appraisal;
2. Development and administration of a questionnaire to identify staff concerns.
3. Training workshops.
4. Peer coaching sessions, and
5. Staff discussions.

TABLE 2:
**COMPOSITE SCORES ON EEI ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL
 FOR EACH COUNTRY/INSTITUTION**

COUNTRY	SCORE & LEADERSHIP STYLE	PILOT FOCUS	ACTIVITIES
Antigua and Barbuda	52.4 Transformational (Medium to Medium-High)	Making data and evidence available to inform decision making	Revision of performance appraisal report Creation of performance appraisal for senior management Workplace climate survey
Barbados	53.0 Transformational (Medium to Medium-High)	Developing leadership skills Sustaining leaders' well-being	Planning a two-day workshop on Leadership Skills
Grenada	51.1 Autocratic/ Transactional (Medium to Medium-High)	Sustaining leaders' well being Making data and evidence available to inform decision making	Use of action tools to address the issue of high workload
Guyana	45.5 Autocratic/ Transactional	Developing Leadership Skills	A three-day workshop was conducted
Regional Institution	45.3 Autocratic/ Transactional	Making data and evidence available to inform decision making *Sustaining leaders' well being Developing leadership skills	Resiliency workshop on sustaining leaders' well being
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	38.6 Autocratic/ Transactional	Making data and evidence available to inform decision making	Session on possibility thinking Unified billing system
Trinidad and Tobago	51.8 Transformational (Medium to Medium-High)	Encouraging self-awareness and personal growth in its leaders Providing the necessary resources	Peer-coaching sessions

7.4: SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PILOT PROJECTS

Although the pilot leads encountered many challenges during the pilot process, there were also several successes that were reported. These successes and opportunities are discussed below.

7.4.1: APPLYING THE ACTION TOOLS

The pilot leads reported that they, along with other participants found the action tools provided quite useful and, in many instances, their application of these tools led to behavioural change. This viewpoint is reflected in the supportive narrative provided by a pilot lead about one of the action tools that was available:

“When I tried out mindfulness actions I realized that on days when I did that I felt a big difference in my level of performance. I was more calm, I was able to connect better, I was able to think more clearly and more objectively so mindfulness in action practice will enhance the way I delivered on occasions, especially in dealing with the heavy workload I have.”

Another pilot lead reported similar successes when applying the peer coaching strategy. The lead noted that:

Pilot participants and other employees shared enthusiasm for the peer coaching activity, which they thought could have been explored within other Divisions. Participants were open in sharing their experiences including their difficulties at peer coaching sessions. Change in behaviour as a result of the peer coaching activities was observed by colleagues.

The application of the action tools provided the leads and their colleagues with the opportunity to implement best practices in their leadership. Additionally, it enabled them to engage in reflective leadership, being mindful of their behaviours and the strategies that they could use for improvement.

7.4.2: REFLECTION AND IMPROVEMENT ON ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES AND BEHAVIOURS

Pilot leads also shared the view that the projects allowed them to reflect (personally and on an organisational level) on various organisational processes within their respective institutions. For example, with issues such as sustaining leaders' well-being, participants shared how they meaningfully reflected on current practices which were counterproductive to leaders' well-being in their respective organisations. This reflection also set a framework for improvement in this area.

The leads also reported that the participants who engaged in pilot- related initiatives such as training workshops indicated that they benefited tremendously from the engagement. Narratives shared by these participants are provided below.

“The training was very insightful and thought-provoking. It has left me with renewed inspiration to reach higher and strive for greater levels of efficiency. The information garnered is very applicable to my current situation and I intend to ensure that the theoretical knowledge is utilized in the daily operations and interactions with persons I encounter.”

Another one of the participants also explained how the pilot initiative in their country has shaped their approach to leadership.

“These sessions were truly enlightening and will impact my life as a leader. Sessions were in-depth and provided opportunity for self- introspection.”

The opportunity to deeply reflect on organisational processes and personal behaviours was also provided through the virtual meetings and peer coaching sessions where pilot leads were encouraged to think about how leadership takes place within their organisations. These sessions also created a community of practice where the various pilot leads could learn and grow from listening to each other's experience(s).

The benefit of the process was also communicated in some of the pilot reports. Sharing his experience from the piloting process, a pilot lead wrote the following narrative in his report:

“The major discovery. . . was that leadership is most effective through staff empowerment, open communication, clear structures, positive reinforcement and presenting an opportunity for coordinated, purposeful endeavours.”

7.5: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE PILOT PROJECTS

Change is not a linear process. There are always moving parts when change is taking place. The shift and unpredictability that often accompanies the change process requires leaders to be adaptive enough to respond appropriately to unforeseen challenges that are very likely to arise.

Among the pilot groups, there were many challenges encountered by the pilot leads during the implementation process. This required them to be adaptive in their leadership. Many of them engaged in solution-oriented approaches when these challenges arose. Unexpected events were the “order of the day” for the pilot leads. Some of these challenges are discussed below.

7.5.1: HURRICANES

During the period of September to October 2017, many Eastern Caribbean Islands were ravished by two devastating hurricanes -Irma and Maria. Unfortunately, these disasters interrupted the normal organisational flow of some of the institutions involved in the pilot project, resulting in substantial delays in affected organisations conducting pilot related activities. However, bearing this unforeseen challenge in mind, one of the pilot groups demonstrated flexibility and adaptiveness by emphasising the focus point of resilience (a pilot activity) during this trying time. This was fitting for the time as this Caribbean island tried to recover from the devastating hurricane. As the pilot lead put it:

“A very significant challenge was found in the passage of Hurricanes Maria and Irma as our operations include those islands very badly affected. This experience was tremendously disruptive. . . and much work had to be done to ensure that [stakeholder] needs were met. We adapted to this by offering the resilience workshop ahead of the meeting to share the survey results. This enabled a higher level of buy-in as it presented an opportunity to meet a relevant and clear need.”

7.5.2: BUY-IN FROM SENIOR LEADERSHIP

In addition to the hurricanes, some of the countries faced challenges in terms of getting buy-in from senior staff; lack of resources; other change processes already taking place in their organisations, and unavailability of pilot participants. In one instance for example, one of the senior leaders in an organisation where the pilot was administered did not believe the pilot results reflected the reality of what was taking place within the organisation. One of the pilot leads described, in a report submitted, described the process as follows:

“[We had to] navigate the tumultuous terrain of resistance and push through with a positive, goal-oriented mindset.”

7.5.3: ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Access to resources also added to the major challenges that the pilot leads encountered. The pilot activities, while innovative, required the pilot leads to have measured support, expertise and other needed resources in leading activities such as brainstorming and workshops. Unanticipated staffing changes and loss of clientele created a few “hiccups” for a couple of the pilot projects. In listing some of the challenges faced while designing and implementing pilot related activities, one pilot lead pointed to:

“Unexpected staffing changes at the pilot site.”

Although a supporting Toolkit was provided to assist with the implementation of pilot related activities, additional support was needed to aid in the successful execution of related tasks. This viewpoint was shared in one of the project reports by the project lead:

“There was no support staff to provide needed assistance especially when follow-up was needed.”

7.5.4: TIME

Many of the pilot leads occupy senior positions within their respective organisations. Therefore, balancing the time associated with the project and related tasks associated with their normal organisational roles presented some difficulty. In articulating some of the major challenges faced, one of the pilot leads stated:

“Fitting the project activities within the full calendars of the pilot group and keeping this project on the ‘front burner’ outside of reminders from the CLP Team.”

The limited time for implementation of pilot activities was a common concern among the pilot groups as captured by the following statement by one of the pilot leads:

“Throughout the project, time played the role of adversary and foe.”

In addition to what was shared above, there was also one report where the pilot leads shared their enthusiasm and eagerness to use the resources provided in the Toolkit, but also reported that they just could not find the time to implement or use these resources.

7.5.5: COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Another key challenge that emerged during the in-country pilots, was the actual process of getting the relevant staff members to complete the questionnaire. One pilot lead described the challenges as follows:

“There were many challenges faced in getting each individual to complete the exercise. Some of which were the questionnaire was too long, some did not have ready access to internet, some forgot, others did not have the time, and others started and did not complete. One person did not receive the questionnaire, and some indicated that the questions were too difficult.”

This quotation succinctly captures the main concerns raised during the administration of the online assessment tool. There were also concerns about confidentiality and anonymity. A lot of follow-up was also required. Pilot leads recognised that they could not just solely rely on sending e-mail reminders as many of the potential respondents did not complete the questionnaire in a timely manner.

7.6: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ACTION AMONG PILOT LEADS

In the final virtual session, the organisational coach started by referring to a popular quote by motivational speaker, Marianne Williamson; it stated:

“Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate but that we are powerful beyond measure . . .”

This was a fitting beginning to the “end” of the pilot projects. The quote epitomised the type of leadership illustrated by the pilot leads throughout the pilot projects – a leadership where they recognised that they were powerful beyond measure – this was transformational leadership.

In fact, the challenges highlighted above, along with the steps taken by the pilot leads to address these challenges, provided a quintessential example of transformational leadership in action.

In managing these challenges, the pilot leads demonstrated the resilience and tenacity that were required to propel themselves and others through the process. They “kept in the game” even though the rules may not have been in their favour.

The many unexpected events that occurred were a test of their fortitude. Nonetheless, they persevered and persisted even in the face of major setbacks. One of the pilot leads, inspired by the process, framed it in a poem entitled: The Organisation Reborn. One of the stanzas succinctly captured the spirit of his experiences with the project and those of other pilot leads.

*“A tale of meandering lanes
Where great leadership sustain.
And guides the willing ear,
To new paths without resistance or fear.
Great prize we can all earn,
When an organisation is new-born.”*

As reflected in the stanzas above, it was amidst the shifting tide that the pilot leads dug deep and kept the process going even when it appeared to be overwhelming. They not only asked themselves what type of leadership is called for, but they also demonstrated that leadership.

It was evident that many of the traits associated with transformational leadership were displayed by the pilot leads as they sought to meet the challenges head on. Among the pilot leads, there was evidence of ingenuity, innovation, tenacity, drive, purpose, commitment, and malleability.

In many cases, they were motivated by a sense of purpose, inspired others; they broke down barriers to action; they kept going and when circumstances mitigated against their success and they found a way to excel. As the CLP organisational coach put it:

“As a transformational leader, you stay in, you show up, you adjust all the time, you reflect so you don’t go below the line or flee, and you make it happen no matter what, and you don’t do it hiding in emails in your predetermined plan and behind your desk.”

The pilot leads stayed in and they showed up despite the obstacles. It was this drive that kept the projects going for the seven-month period. Confronting battles of time, lack of support, natural disasters and unavailability of staff, the pilot leads led the projects to the very end. They adapted, persevered, and persisted. They are true Regional Transformers.

7.6.1: THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE REGIONAL TRANSFORMERS

The participatory and collaborative approach used to guide the pilot leads, meant that the CLP organisational coach, along with other members of the CLP research team, were kept apprised of all

the pilot related activities undertaken by the seven organisations. This allowed the CLP team to see the pilot leads in action.

Emerging from these observations was a model that reflected the type of leadership practice that each of the pilot leads engaged in as they spearheaded the projects. This model is based on the acronym E.D.U.C.A.T.E.

E - Begin with the end in mind.

D - Be disciplined.

U - Deal with the unexpected.

C - Capitalise on structures of fulfilment.

A - Access and seize opportunities.

T - Take time to reflect vs flee.

E - Evaluate results with eyes and hearts wide open.

7.7: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PILOT PROJECTS

Although the pilot projects created an important foundation for change within the respective organisations, many of the pilot leads agreed that for meaningful change to be made, the projects will have to be extended beyond the seven-month period.

During the final virtual session, the question of sustainability was central. The CLP organisational coach led this session by asking the pilot leads the key question: “What type of leadership is required as you move into the what’s next?”

One innovative strategy that many of the pilot teams adopted to sustain the projects was to incorporate them into existing initiatives within their organisations such as strategic plans. This will not only enhance the longevity of the project, but it will also ensure that the leadership of the organisation does not perceive the project to be an “additional” activity, but rather an area of focus that is directly connected to their strategic directives.

7.8: LESSONS LEARNT

While the in-country pilots were a success, there were some invaluable lessons that the CLP research team learnt during the process; these include:

1. Clearer instructions on the administration of the EEI and who completes it will be needed.
2. Consistent follow-up and reminders for completion of the online assessment tool will be needed. If possible, a specific time and location should be used to administer the survey.
3. Dedicated structures as well as a support team must be put in place to facilitate this initiative being conducted in conjunction with everyday work-related tasks for senior leaders.
4. Success in a leadership position is not determined by external sources or circumstances, but rather, the individual’s inner propensity and desire to excel. This is a trait that typifies transformational leaders.
5. Caribbean institutions need to find innovative ways to obtain resources to facilitate the practice of transformational leadership. Most organisations seem to be stronger in the subjective quadrants – individual experience and collaboration. This suggests that the focus should be on supporting leaders through the objective quadrants, which emphasise tangible resources and structures. These can go a long way in empowering leaders to excel.



CHAPTER 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2

The findings from this research indicate that, in the Caribbean, both public organisations and regional institutions continue to endure significant challenges. For example, international and domestic financial pressures have placed these institutions in a tenuous economic state, leaving many governments and regional organisations cash strapped (Roberts, 2012). Apart from financial issues, systems, policies, structures and regulations also need to be improved to create environments that enable transformational leadership.

However, what this research demonstrates, is that despite these difficult circumstances, effective Caribbean leaders stand up and lead. This view is corroborated by the results that emerged from both Phases 1 and 2.

In Phase 1, the interviewees shared real-life authentic situations in which they were required to demonstrate courageous leadership. Their stories suggested that the enabling environment does not originate outside of the individual, but rather, individuals are guided and propelled by an inner drive to lead – the enabling environment comes from within.

Many of the leaders interviewed shared stories where they had to overcome several obstacles (i.e. lack of cooperation from staff, financial challenges, discrimination based on age and gender, absence of policies etc.) in their organisation. It was their courageous leadership which eventually led to significant improvements in their respective organisations. Their responses also pointed to four key practices that Caribbean organisations

need to engage in to facilitate transformational leadership. These practices are reflected in the four themes that emerged from the interviewee responses.

1. Foster and inspire purpose-driven leadership
2. Build leadership capacity for action
3. Encourage collaboration
4. Support the achievement of results

In Phase 2, the Pilot Phase, the findings from the Organisational Assessment Tool, indicated that the pilot organisations needed to do more to enable transformational leadership. Nonetheless, it was in this phase that the participants did more than speak about their transformational leadership; they demonstrated it.

While implementing the pilot activities, the pilot leads faced several challenges, ranging from human resource constraints to hurricanes. Yet, they found ways to steer the course. They confronted those challenges head on and used their inner drive to complete the pilots.

8.2: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings that emerged from this research.

1. Creation of a framework that will lead to improvements in systems, policies and procedures.
2. Exposure to training in emotional intelligence.
3. Stronger implementation of talent management and succession planning systems.
4. Stricter enforcement of accountability systems and regulations.
5. Developing organisational cultures based on mutual respect and trust.



APPENDIX 1

MODEL OF AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS



APPENDIX 2

SCORES ON THE 4 MAJOR THEMES AND THE 16 SUB-ELEMENTS FOR PILOT ORGANISATIONS

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA OVERALL SCORE: 52.4	
FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.4
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.5
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.4
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	3.3
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.4
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	3.1
Developing leadership skills	2.9
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	3.3
Sustaining leaders' well-being	3.0
Breaking down barriers to action	3.3
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	3.5
Enhancing the flow of information	3.5
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	3.4
Promoting teamwork	3.6
Providing support in mobilising people	3.4
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	3.1
Providing the necessary resources	3.0
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	3.2
Providing structures and accountability	3.4
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	2.9

BARBADOS

OVERALL SCORE: 53.0



FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.4
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.3
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.6
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	3.2
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.4
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	3.0
Developing leadership skills	3.0
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	3.2
Sustaining leaders' well-being	3.0
Breaking down barriers to action	2.6
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	3.5
Enhancing the flow of information	3.4
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	3.4
Promoting teamwork	3.8
Providing support in mobilising people	3.4
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	3.4
Providing the necessary resources	3.6
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	3.4
Providing structures and accountability	3.4
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	3.2

GRENADA

OVERALL SCORE: 51.1



FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.4
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.2
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.6
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	3.4
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.4
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	3.0
Developing leadership skills	3.0
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	3.2
Sustaining leaders' well-being	2.8
Breaking down barriers to action	3.0
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	3.3
Enhancing the flow of information	3.4
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	3.0
Promoting teamwork	3.4
Providing support in mobilising people	3.6
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	3.1
Providing the necessary resources	2.6
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	3.5
Providing structures and accountability	3.5
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	2.7

GUYANA

OVERALL SCORE: 45.5



FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.0
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.1
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.3
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	2.6
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.2
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	2.7
Developing leadership skills	2.5
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	3.0
Sustaining leaders' well-being	2.5
Breaking down barriers to action	2.8
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	2.8
Enhancing the flow of information	3.0
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	2.9
Promoting teamwork	2.8
Providing support in mobilising people	2.6
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	2.8
Providing the necessary resources	2.5
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	2.9
Providing structures and accountability	3.2
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	2.6

REGIONAL INSTITUTION

OVERALL SCORE: 45.3

FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.1
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.0
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.4
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	2.9
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.2
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	2.5
Developing leadership skills	2.4
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	2.8
Sustaining leaders' well-being	2.1
Breaking down barriers to action	2.7
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	3.0
Enhancing the flow of information	2.8
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	3.0
Promoting teamwork	2.9
Providing support in mobilising people	3.2
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	2.7
Providing the necessary resources	2.5
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	3.0
Providing structures and accountability	3.2
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	2.2

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

OVERALL SCORE: 38.6



FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	2.2
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	2.1
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	2.3
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	2.1
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	2.4
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	2.2
Developing leadership skills	2.0
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	2.2
Sustaining leaders' well-being	2.1
Breaking down barriers to action	2.6
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	2.6
Enhancing the flow of information	2.8
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	2.6
Promoting teamwork	2.6
Providing support in mobilising people	2.3
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	2.6
Providing the necessary resources	2.8
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	2.8
Providing structures and accountability	3.0
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	1.9

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

OVERALL SCORE: 51.8

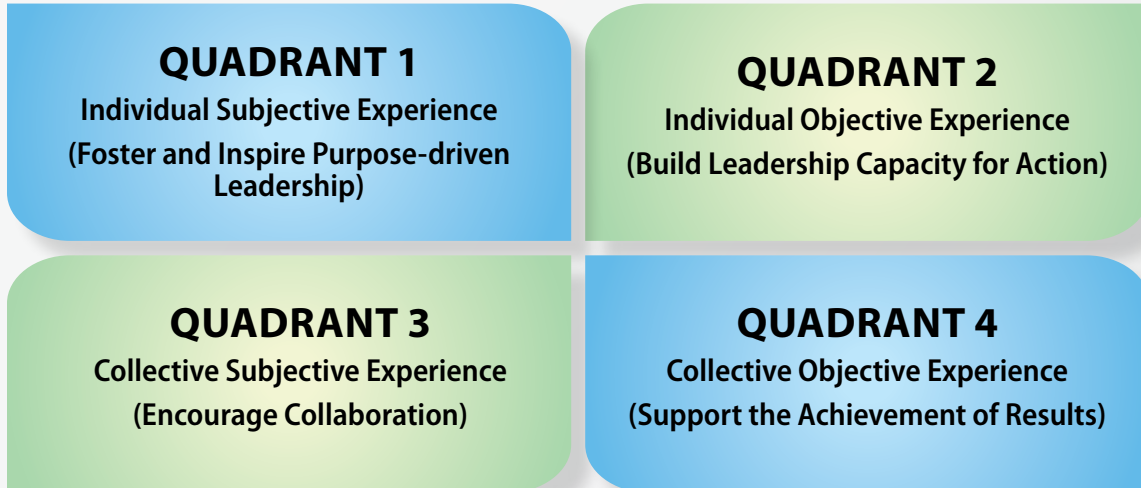


FOSTER AND INSPIRE PURPOSE DRIVEN LEADERSHIP	3.4
Demonstrating exemplary ethical practices, professionalism & integrity on the part of all leaders	3.4
Providing meaningful challenges to its leaders	3.7
Encouraging self-awareness & personal growth in its leaders	2.8
Encouraging a cohesive leadership community of shared purposes	3.7
BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR ACTION	2.9
Developing leadership skills	2.8
Broadening the leadership bandwidth to include position-based leaders & leadership that is present in any job	3.5
Sustaining leaders' well-being	2.2
Breaking down barriers to action	3.1
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION	3.7
Enhancing the flow of information	3.6
Assisting leaders in establishing informal/formal networks	3.5
Promoting teamwork	4.0
Providing support in mobilising people	3.5
SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	3.0
Providing the necessary resources	2.6
Establishing processes and regulatory frameworks	2.9
Providing structures and accountability	3.5
Making data and evidence available to measure progress and inform decision-making	3.0

APPENDIX 3

INTEGRAL AND APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY MODELS

The Integral Model



The Appreciative Inquiry Model



Taken from: <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/learning-engagement/workplace-team-SOLUTIONS/APPRECIATIVE-INQUIRY/>

APPENDIX 4

ACTION RESEARCH ROUND-TABLE MODEL



The Action-Research Round-table Model is a unique applied research approach developed by the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD). The model brings together diverse practitioners and experts in the field to dialogue about any central issues or challenges that impact on work-flow or governmental success.

The aim of this research is not only to have dialogue on the issues but to produce a product that can be used to implement meaningful change within organisations. The model is therefore end-user driven. That is, with the involvement of those individuals who are going to be the users of the product, there is more buy-in and recognition of the value, not only of the end-product but the research process itself.

To summarise, the model emphasises:

1. Dialogue
2. End-user value
3. Evidenced-based advice
4. Actionable advice
5. Producing and end product
6. Diversity of opinion and thought

APPENDIX 5

LISTS OF ARRT 2 MEMBERS & CLP RESEARCH TEAM

NAME	COUNTRY OF ORGANISATION	ROLE
Mr. James Armstrong	Canada	General Member
Mr. Charley Browne	Barbados	General Member
Mrs. Denise Dumas-Koylass	Trinidad and Tobago	General Member
Mr. Shawn Grey	Jamaica	General Member
Mr. Wayne Jones	Jamaica	General Member
Ir. Denise Kort	Suriname	General Member
Dr. Luz Longworth	Barbados	General Member
Ms. Sandra Massiah	Barbados	General Member
Mr. Devon Rowe	Barbados	General Member
Ms. Kattian Barnwell	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Co-Chair
Ms. Roxanne Cameron	Canada	Assessment Tool Developer & Organisational Coach
Mr. James Clemens	Canada	Facilitator
Dr. Jason Marshall	Barbados	Lead Researcher
Dr. Lois Parkes	Barbados	Co-Chair & Regional Project Manager

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VISION

The Caribbean Leadership Project is a dynamic, integrated renewable community of adaptive leaders transforming the regional public sector into one that instils trust and confidence.

MISSION

Given the essential role of the public service in achieving national and regional growth and development objectives, the Caribbean Leadership Project will support Heads of Government and key regional institutions to develop a network of leaders equipped to navigate the globally imposed and regionally inspired transformations.