
ACCELERATING TALENT DEVELOPMENT FOR THE NEXT LEADER: LESSON LEARNED FROM DOMPET DHUAFA

Asep Sapa'at

Dompét Dhuafa

E-mail: asepsapaat@dompetdhuafa.org

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Abstract

This research illustrates the importance of a leadership-based professional development program known as the "Leadership Enhancement and Advancement Program" (LEAP) in the context of the non-profit organization Dompét Dhuafa. The LEAP program is designed to develop competencies and train leadership skills of Dompét Dhuafa employees. The research method used in this study is qualitative research, focusing on the analysis of LEAP program documents, the analysis of LEAP participants' essays on leadership, and the results of interviews with 24 LEAP participants. This study aims to describe the contribution of leadership-based professional development programs to regeneration in Dompét Dhuafa, as well as to explain participants' perceptions of the LEAP program. The results revealed that the LEAP program has made a significant contribution to developing the competence and leadership skills of Dompét Dhuafa employees. The program has fostered positive career development, the development of future leaders, and the improvement of overall organizational effectiveness. In the document analysis, key findings included increased participant participation in strategic projects, increased understanding of leadership principles, and improved teamwork among Dompét Dhuafa employees. Meanwhile, interviews with LEAP participants revealed positive perceptions of the program, with participants highlighting the personal and professional benefits they gained from LEAP. The research emphasizes that leadership-based professional development programs such as LEAP can be an effective tool in preparing competent and qualified cadres for non-profit organizations. With a focus on developing leadership competencies, such programs can enhance an organization's capacity to achieve its goals and provide long-term benefits to participants and the organizations they serve themselves as leaders and help LEAP participants grow into future leaders of Dompét Dhuafa.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of institutional change and organizational development, institutions are required to always be relevant to the demands of change and technological development. The logical consequence, employees must also enhance their skills and competencies to remain relevant (Bodilenyane & Mooketsane, 2019). Organizational development is determined by the capacity of its human resources to pursue the organization's goals. Therefore, the organization needs to be concerned and serious about developing employee competencies. This is what becomes a priceless investment in the form of well-planned, measurable, sustainable, and impactful education and training programs for the employee. Competence and organizational culture have a positive and significant influence on human resource performance (Airyq et al., 2023).

The issue of leadership in nonprofits is interesting to examine. Leaders in nonprofits have many roles to play for the organization to continue to grow. The role of the nonprofit leader is critical in encouraging stakeholders to make commitments of time, effort, and wealth for the advancement of organizational goals (Lane & Wallis, 2009). (Lane & Wallis, 2009) note that nonprofit leaders must make decisions about the right leadership style to maintain a climate of expectation among their stakeholders. As a change agent, the non-profit leader is confronted with the numerous challenges of creating and sustaining major organizational change. Regulatory, economic, and technological changes have forced non-profit organizations to adapt quickly and effectively, putting a premium on executive leadership that is capable of facilitating organizational change (Nadler & Tushman, 1990).

Every leader of a non-profit organization shares the goal of enhancing the quality of decision-making and the utilization of emotional intelligence skills can assist in the attainment of that goal. Non-profit leaders who are self-aware and can accurately and honestly assess their strengths in comparison to others in the organization have the advantage of leveraging the attributes of others in the decision-making process (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013).

Leaders are not born. Organizations should design human resource development programs that focus on aspects of leadership and continuous learning. Based on the engagement survey results in Dompot Dhuafa in the years 2021 and 2022, employee training is one of the 3 highest issues that need to be considered. The availability of employees to join the training programs and providing training programs to support employee performance are the things that need to be continuously developed time by time. Confidence in leaders is another issue that must be solved.

As the information shown in Figure 1, in the year 2021, training was considered the lowest aspect in the survey. And in the year 2022, training was in second lowest place. On the other hand, the issue related to succession is still a main challenge in the organization. Employee capacity development and leadership development are two things that have to concurrently. Leadership Enrichment and Acceleration Program (LEAP) was designed to develop and accelerate self and leadership potentials not only for Head Office employees but also for Branch Office and Program Office employees.

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth (Susabowska, 2015.). Continuous professional development (CPD) is important for employee personal development and is of strategic value for organizations. Having qualified and knowledgeable personnel can help deploy strategy and yield a competitive advantage in the marketplace (McDermott, Olivia; Barrow, Deirdre; Butler, Mary, 2021). LEAP is a leadership-based professional capacity development program in Dompot Dhuafa that applies mentoring and CPD principles. To accelerate and spread professional development, LEAP wasn't only aimed at Head Office employees but was also aimed at Branch Office and Program Office employees, which widely spread almost all over Indonesia regions. At LEAP, mentoring is one of the approaches used to grow the leadership capacity of Dompot Dhuafa employees.

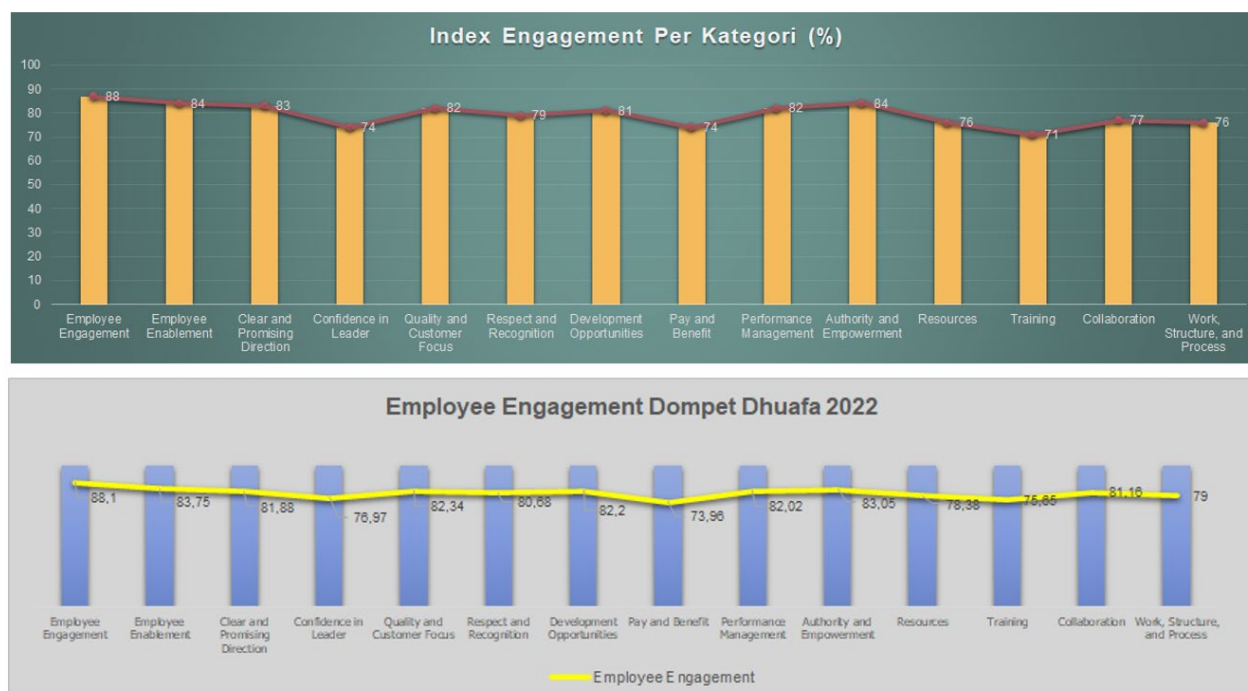


Figure 1.
Employee Engagement Dompot Dhuafa, the years 2021 and 2022

LEAP is a leadership-based professional capacity development program in Dompot Dhuafa that applies mentoring and CPD principles to enhance the quality of decision-making as a leader. There were 3 main purposes of LEAP. **First**, to transform our competency framework to become a competent behavior. Dompot Dhuafa has 3 main competency frameworks that have to be embedded in the employee, consisting of core, soft, and technical competencies. Core competency is a basic value that underlies every act and mindset. Our values are called INSPIRE, those are Integritas (Integrity), Sinergi (Sinergy), Profesional (Professional), Inovatif (Innovative), and Responsif (Responsive). For soft competency, the 4 main competency aspects are thinking ability, managing self, managing tasks, and managing people. Technical competencies may vary from those related to a specific capability in each employee regarded as their expertise in fundraising, operational, empowerment programs, community development, communication, etc.

Second, to accelerate talent development, in context to involve all the employees all over Indonesia to register and join the program. Besides, this program is run systematically for less than 8 months from August 2021 to March 2022. The program is run online using Zoom considering the COVID-19 pandemic and cost efficiency for the participants outside the Head Office area. The learning approach focuses on problem-based and project-based, from a daily problem to an advanced problem to be solved, and assigning projects to each participant to ensure that the learning process is fully absorbed and the content applies to their KPI's achievement progress. The project assignment is a genuine idea of the participants to be executed and solved related to their daily work.

Third, mapping leadership potential among the participants as future leaders of Dompot Dhuafa. Every participant was assisted by their supervisor and mentor from cross division which are managerial lines in Dompot Dhuafa. Their profile is continuously observed and measured in each phase of the learning process, the completion of their tasks, mentoring session, and their final project assignment.

Mentoring leadership is one of the approaches used at LEAP. Mentoring involves senior employees becoming role models in career development and providing personal support to junior employees

(Arthur & Kram, 1985). Mentoring may be informal or formal, but typically the primary functions associated with mentoring are vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

The success of leadership and mentoring is based on effective relationships (Bodilenyane & Mooketsane, 2019). Leadership and mentoring essentially involve relationships between senior and junior persons in organizations. Mentoring and transformational leadership have been linked to similar outcomes, job satisfaction, employee attitudes, and career satisfaction.

What are leadership mentoring attributes? (Hodgson & Scanlan, 2013) conducted a concept analysis of mentoring involves the relationship of 2 or more individuals with different levels of experience, mentors and mentees share knowledge and experience to achieve a certain goal. Cardiff and colleagues (Buckner, 2019) utilized a person-centered leadership approach that included reflection, leading/evaluating a leadership practice change, and developing insight into leadership development. Cardiff and colleagues' attributes were being person-centered and authentically other-centered and caring. They found self-awareness emerged from reflections and that being open, patient, and optimistic fostered a sense of tranquility as leaders listened and supported mentees' progress toward goals.

In this study, we will discuss: 1) How can leadership-based professional development programs contribute to the generation process in organizations?; 2) What are participants' perceptions and experiences of leadership-based professional development programs at Dompot Dhuafa?

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach. The subjects of the study were 24 participants of the LEAP Batch 1 program consisting of 10 men and 14 women. The data collection method in this study was document analysis and interviews. The documents analyzed are written documents by LEAP participants about leadership analysis in zakat institutions and LEAP Batch 1 program reports. The instruments in this qualitative research use interview guides and document analysis guides. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The LEAP Selection Process is Rigorous.

The selection process of LEAP is tight and selective. Each candidate should gain permission and recommendation from their supervisor to join this program. Then, the candidates have to write an authentic essay, followed by psychological test sequences. The candidate who gains recommendation from the assessor as a career person (their competency is qualified), specialist (almost qualified and still needs continuous development for 2 to 3 years), potential candidate (several competencies are unqualified, and still need continuous development for less than a year) are selected to join LEAP as participants, while the candidates who were stated as a problem employee (several competencies are unqualified and still need a continuous development for more than 3 years) are disqualified from the process.

2. The Critical Factors of Successful Learning at LEAP

If there is any assumption that the employee of Head Office is better than they are in the Branch and Program Office, totally indisputable. The top 10 participants are widely spread from any entity, there are 5 employees from Head Office, 4 employees from Brand Office, and 1 employee from Program Office, moreover, the highest 1 and 2 came from Branch and Program Office. This acceleration and broadening access to capacity development can be continuously implemented in the future time.

A self-learning factor and self-regulation are well-contributed to their successful learning process during LEAP rather than the geographical factor where the participant works. Self-regulation is not a mental ability or an academic performance skill; rather it is the self-directive process by which learners

transform their mental abilities into academic skills (Zimmerman, 2002). Learners who have good self-regulation can be proactive in the learning process because they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They also have clear learning goals and a variety of strategies to achieve learning goals.

No	Name	Office	Job Title	Working Unit
1.	ADE	DD Yogyakarta	Supervisor	Fundraising
2.	SA	Institut Kemandirian	Manager	Program
3.	AWJ	DD Pusat	Officer	Program
4.	NH	DD Pusat	Officer	Fundraising
5.	ZT	DD Pusat	Officer	Fundraising
6.	RA	DD Sumsel	Manager	Program
7.	AR	DD Pusat	Officer	Operational
8.	S	DD Sulsel	Supervisor	Program
9.	THE	DD Pusat	Officer	Brand Activation
10.	IH	DD Yogyakarta	Supervisor	Program

Table 1.
Top 10 LEAP Participants

Several research results show the importance of self-regulation in learning to build personal qualities. First, self-regulation in learning involves more than detailed knowledge of a skill, it involves self-awareness, self-motivation, and behavioral skills to apply knowledge. Second, self-regulation in learning is not singular. On the other hand, self-regulation requires a different process for each person in carrying out their learning tasks. Third, the quality of self-motivation of independent learners depends on self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 2002). To specially and continuously train the ability to self-regulated and self-learning positively impacted the LEAP participants.

Based on the results of interviews with 4 LEAP participants who received the 4th best ranking, the following are critical success factors that led them to successfully study in the LEAP program.

Name	Institutions	Critical Factors of Successful Learning	Statements
ADE	DD Yogyakarta	Self-commitment, Time Management Skills, Support from Leaders & Mentors	<i>“In the LEAP program, I consciously aim to explore knowledge, insights, and experiences as optimally as possible. I feel that this learning opportunity is a pity if it is only half-hearted.”</i>
SA	Institut Kemandirian	Self-commitment, Support from Leaders, and the Good Curriculum of LEAP	<i>“Support from the management of the Institute of Self-Reliance, a curriculum relevant to the professional development needs in the field of work, and self-commitment to improve self-competence to benefit people became my driving force to study at LEAP”.</i>
AW	DD Pusat	Support from leaders and mentors, focus and serious about participating in LEAP.	<i>“The LEAP process was taken very seriously from the start, with strict selection criteria managed by the Human Capital department of Dompot Dhuafa & IMZ. This motivated me to become more focused and committed to the LEAP program. The program is fascinating because I get to work closely with experienced leaders and mentors. I frequently engage in</i>

			<i>discussions with the leaders at DD and seek their guidance to enhance my understanding of work management.”</i>
ZT	DD Pusat	Self-motivation, Relevance between the LEAP program and the institution's target work, Mentors' Direction	<i>“Follow the mentor's directions. Be confident that the mentor has experience and ideas beyond what we have. Discussions and arguments are carried out with mentors so that the learning process is good and the final project designed can be completed with good results.”</i>

Table 2.
The Critical Factors of Successful Learning in LEAP

3. Mentoring Leadership as a Process of Value Internalization.

Mentoring is often recognized as a useful tool for human resource development (HRD) (McCauley, 2005: 1). All participants will learn their mentors' & leaders' wisdom. On the other hand, their leaders are more understanding about their staff's potential and able to evaluate their daily leadership skills, as well as how they (the leaders) embed the organization's competency framework in themselves. Mentoring is necessary not only for enhancing “culturedness” in the organization but also for an increase in the mentee's knowledge and skills (Susabowska, 2015). Wenger et al., 2002 state that the mentors and mentees of the group mentoring leadership become a community of practice as they bond and share values and information (Gray, 2018).

4. LEAP is a Systematic and Structured Leadership-Based Professional Development Program.

All LEAP participants have gained knowledge and skills about the institution's business processes and how to become Dompot Dhuafa's future leaders. The LEAP program uses a competency framework Dompot Dhuafa-based curriculum. A competency framework is a list of competency types, competency definitions, and descriptions for each competency level compiled. DD has core competence, behavioral competence, and technical competence. Core competence is a competency that is a reflection of personal qualities (values & attitudes) based on the adaptation of the institution's values (value-driven) that must be possessed by all employees at various levels of position. Soft competence is a type of competency related to the ability to manage work and build interaction with others. Technical competence is a technical skill related to the work function carried out that must be owned by certain office holders and work areas.

LEAP is a systematic and structured program to encourage participants to have all competencies and forge a leadership spirit as future leaders of DD. The best participants of LEAP from DD Yogyakarta states:

“The LEAP program is extraordinary because it is packaged systematically and structured, starting from the selection of materials, the selection of expert resource persons in their fields, then the preparation of mentors who accompany participants to learn, and of course we can learn from each other among fellow LEAP participants. In this program, we learn how to manage a team, design programs, and personal branding. What is interesting in my opinion is one of them is the material about personal maturity. This is very much needed by a leader, namely intellectual maturity, emotional maturity, social maturity, and maturity related to achievement drive. This can help leaders be adaptive to change. I hope that this LEAP can continue to be successful and continue to produce leaders who are ready to face change and spread goodness and benefit to many people”.

CONCLUSION

Continuous professional development (CPD) is important for employee personal development and is of strategic value for organizations. LEAP is a leadership-based professional capacity development program in Dompot Dhuafa that applies mentoring and CPD principles to enhance the quality of leadership. LEAP is a method for improving the leadership process in a non-profit organization like Dompot Dhuafa. The characteristic of leaders is learning to grow themselves while developing team members. Through continuous improvement efforts to the LEAP program on an ongoing basis, Dompot Dhuafa can carry out the process of leadership regeneration and continuous professional development holistically and comprehensively.

Leadership-based professional development programs are essential for Dompot Dhuafa employees. This program prepares Dompot Dhuafa employees to understand the institution's business processes and hone their skills as leaders. This systematically planned and measurable program maps the leadership potential of LEAP participants to become future DD leaders. LEAP participants benefit from this program because they are equipped with knowledge and skills, and accompanied by mentors from DD so that they can mature their way of thinking and attitude of leading before filling the position structure available at DD. The recommendations of this study recommend conducting a more in-depth study of what factors most influence LEAP participants to be able to join the LEAP program to completion and succeed in becoming DD leaders in the future.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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