



Ethics and Leadership: Developing a Universal Code for an Evolving Africa

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ABSTRACT

Africa is currently challenged with an eroding ethical leadership base across the continent. The foundation of past ethical thought and exploring authoritative sources has led to a general understanding and consensus of what ethics should subscribe to. Africa, and South Africa in particular, is at a junction where the quest for a renewed spirit and united front for re-establishing an ethical foundation is eminent. Higher education and evolving curriculum in typical leadership programmes is important in sewing a 'golden thread' throughout every curriculum thus portraying the critical importance of a renewed thrust in strategic community development globally. To solve the current dilemma that is fragmenting the continent regarding the degeneration of ethical conduct amongst current leadership in Africa, the paper undertakes to concentrate on possible models and the essence thereof for innovative ethical solutions to emerge. Developing higher education global systems and critically evaluating policy, practice and its evolving implementation that incorporates a paradigm of thinking that not only takes into account the past (in-the-box thinking), the current evolving 'outside-of-the-box' thinking but explores a shift that encourages teaching, learning and innovation with a renewed higher education basket of tools. The ultimate journey is a new focus on a shift toward 'without-the-box' thinking for further development in higher education using a learner-centred approach in a flipped classroom environment thus encouraging a renewed ethos embedded in an innovative future professional that should emerge. The outcome is a renewed approach to revitalise higher education in a fast and vibrant technological global environment, encouraging a new generation of dynamic, strategic African leaders that can address the on-going evolving sustainable development leadership challenges which are currently fragmenting and destabilising the continent.

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Introduction

Scholars' interrogations of Africa's predicaments reveal that its embattled development is constrained by lack of positive, ethical and public leadership. This has deterred the citizens' interest and trust in the state. Agyeman, an African scholar, emphasises the following: "If we were to be very honest with ourselves, we surely would not find it too difficult to be convinced of the fact that Africans have been irresponsible and harmful to Africa in terms of self-governance" (Agyeman, 2003, p. 276).

The idea of unresponsive governance is demonstrated in the leaders' impassive, indifferent and languid attitude towards the concept of citizenry as the real basis for governance. Africa's common experience has been that of leadership who do not recognise the difference between the public funds and their private funds (Agbude & Etete, 2013, p. 484).

In Africa, there are a myriad of examples in which problems arising from poor leadership are recorded. These problems result in the underdevelopment of most African nations and hardship in the lives of its people. Consequently, one sees among many countries seeming disillusionment and the desire for a better life by plotting to overthrow the government. As such, and especially more recently, there have been some revolutionary movements against the governments of various nations in Africa, as witnessed in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt (Okoye, 2013, p. 21). Strategic leadership models focusing on an ethical

foundation can contribute to the development of new developing sectors and assist leaders globally with their future challenges. A triple-bottom line approach can realise the fact that not for profit, does not necessarily mean not for gain. This means that reporting should take into account all economic, social and environmental issues (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2009). The King III Report acknowledges the importance of stakeholders and sustainability reporting. According to the King III report, "reporting should be integrated across all areas of performance". The inclusion of three parameters: economic, social and environmental, is consistent with the triple-bottom line reporting requirement that companies and organisations need to display a corporate conscience in respect of social and environmental sustainability. Business ethics and corporate governance issues must take into account future generations. An inclusive, stakeholder-centred approach towards corporate governance in South Africa is contained in the corporate governance guidelines which is indicative of a fair representation of corporate governance on the African continent as a whole. Ethics and Leadership thinking 'without the box' (Rippon, Indermun, Asmal, Mutobola, Matsongoni, Moodley & Khan, 2014) is now the order of the day and evolving Higher Education models need to take into account the graduate attributes to be developed so that we can remain in harmony with developmental changes, not only locally but globally as well.

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The management of educational institutions is often performed by participants in public or private organisations from within their communities. Unethical behaviour can often result in low levels of participation and performance by participants nominated to manage and efficiently implement professional activities, projects and programmes, provide benefits and service their community citizens successfully.

Background to the problem

Ethical and leadership models need to be developed to support new trends for change locally, across the continent and globally. The current dilemma that is fragmenting the continent has resulted in the degeneration of ethical conduct amongst current leadership in Africa.

According to Choudaha (2014), transparency through data reporting and information sharing is an important policy. Higher education institutions lack transparency in their policies. In many instances, this results in low levels of participation, commitment and performance within these educational institutions. The rigidity of these structures in an immovable state results in an indeterminate position. This leads to an inability to adapt to change. Regulatory bodies in higher education must manage these institutions more closely as many critical issues of concern are currently dealt with by these institutions.

In counties across the globe, civil society supported by governments, plays a critical role in transformation processes that affect a variety of existing and newly developing educational systems. The ultimate community challenge is to ensure sustainable development to efficiently manage a variety of educational resources. This can only be completed if a common value system is agreed upon. The desired sustainable community development objectives are not being achieved. Figure 1 illustrates strategic management principles and processes in community development at grass roots level which are key for African ethical leadership. Integrity is an integral characteristic of leadership principles. Thoughts on leadership, management and how they pertain to innovation and enterprise survival with regards to African leaders seeking a bottom-up approach centred around ethics and integrity-testing.



Figure 1. Ethics and leadership: Evolving Curriculum for Africa highlight attributes of a good leader

Source: Adapted from Leadership and Innovation (Abolrous, 2010, p. 1).

Aim and objectives

Many communities across the globe are not applying best management higher educational practices for sourcing and allocating available resources. To achieve the desired results more efficiently, this paper will concentrate on selected

educational best practices and innovations. Community leaders can utilise these practices as a roadmap with tools for facilitating future Strategic Community Development throughout the world. To achieve these objectives globally, educational institutions may rely on innovative models to develop future teaching and learning practices in order to achieve a common value system.

This paper further aims to provide community leaders with a clearer understanding of how developing leadership and ethics, can vastly assist communities in South Africa, Africa and provide for innovative trends globally for that matter.

New strategies and educational models can develop leadership practice in ethics whilst efficiently managing community resources. The evolving nature thereof is an incremental learning process, if applied well, can assist with achieving sustainable development in communities globally for generations to come. Community leaders need to be sensitive towards developing the community in a responsible manner for the next generation.

The following objectives have been identified for the study:

- To develop an understanding of the extent of the ethical and leadership dilemma on the continent of Africa based on past and present data.
- To design and develop innovative educational models to address the challenges related to ethical leadership and higher education in Africa.

Literature review

Literature in support of the paper includes references from local, regional and international sources which include books, journal articles, reports and literature from newspaper articles related to ethics and leadership. Personal observations found by each of the authors that reflect on the past findings, current research and future trends envisaged have been taken into account.

According to the Department of Social Development (Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Organisations, 2001, p. 5), community life in the South African democracy is defined by three distinct groups of organisations which have important impacts. These are the State or Government, private enterprise or the business sector, and Non-profit Organisation sector made up of a few or a number of individuals in the community who agree to act together for common purpose.

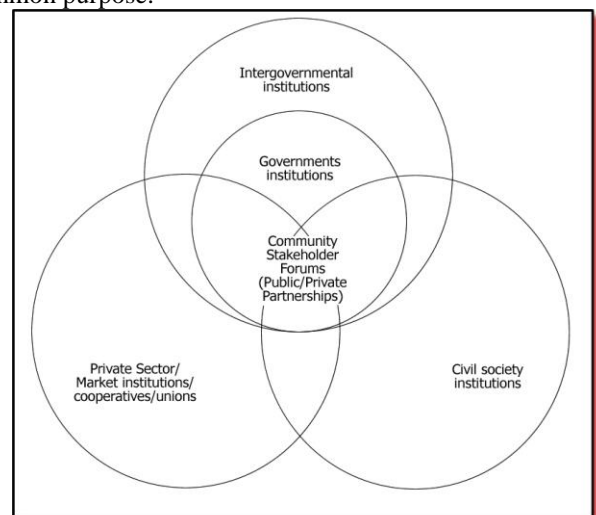


Figure 2. Sustainable Development Triad

Source: Adapted from (Dalal, Clayton & Bass, 2002, p. 186).

In Figure 2 change and transformation processes affecting an integrated number of existing and newly developed

community environments must be supported by civil society and local government in South Africa. Civil society includes the activities of individuals and organisations in communities. These activities include developmental, religious, cultural, social, economic, environmental, and political.

A global paradigm shift must be set in motion in order to encourage community uplifting processes. The emerging bottom-up fulfilling a top-down design set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) by specialists displays a formulated strategy. This strategy entrenches the legacy and principles of Nelson Mandela thus making every day a Mandela Day and not just on 18th of July.

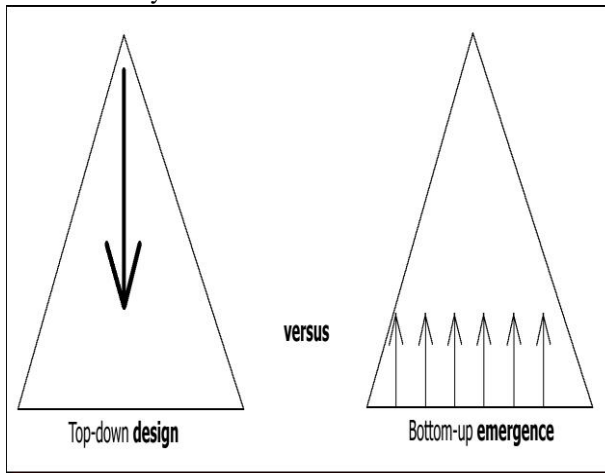


Figure 3. Bottom-up emergence versus a top down design.
Source: (Cumming & Wilson, 2003, p. 2)

Philanthropy and hybrid ventures include a combination of social networking, creativity and innovation which develops social cohesion and ethical value. New business models can assist with higher education interventions for strategic community development challenges in the fast changing ‘global village’. This can result in contributions toward a future desired state for a community’s victory. Community leadership needs to be sensitive towards teaching and learning practice in a responsible manner. According to Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association (2015), professional learning within communities require continuous improvement, promotes collective responsibility, and supports alignment of individual, team, school, and school system goals.

Leadership encompasses responsibility to one’s peers, family, community and society in general.

Figure 4 illustrates the circles of influence that intertwine and forms part of the holistic systems approach.

In the context of ‘global business not as usual’ it is recommended that a learning process approach (Rippon et. al, 2014) be adopted incrementally. In this way, further development collectively and globally, results in one continent, one country, one community and one neighbourhood. This exercise at grass roots incorporates a bottom-up emergence versus top-down design strategy. This strategy can unite governments, business and society with evolving educational models to incorporate ethics and leadership, social networking and collaboration in a variety of global communities. Figure 5 highlights the various business schools that have benchmarked notable practices in teaching ethics.

Table 1 highlights ethics being taught as a subject in a variety of global business schools. A selected group of international business schools were analysed and ranked from one to fifty and it is quite evident that there is a need for ethical leadership training and development.

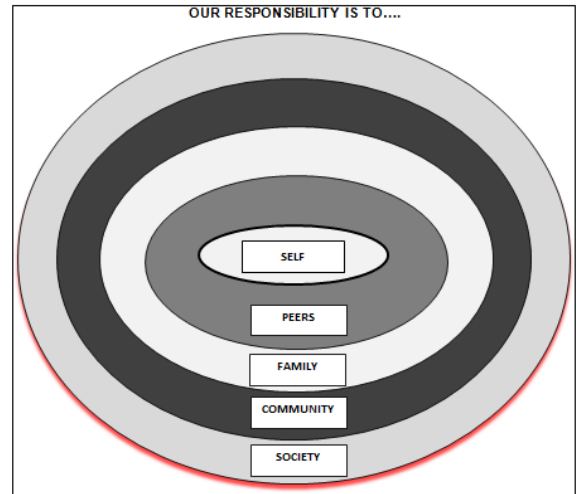


Figure 4. Responsibility to self and others in a typical community environment

Source: Adapted from (“An effective leadership model for Africa’s development”, 2004).

Benchmarking: Notable Practices	
This study uncovered several notable practices in teaching ethics, CSR, and sustainability in top business schools.	
Ethics	<p>The University of Virginia, Darden School of Business has developed a simulation program that integrates ethics into business decision-making and is required for first-year MBA students.</p> <p>The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania has an exemplary program teaching, emphasizing, and integrating ethics in the curriculum, including an option for students to make ethics a “major,” noted on their transcripts.</p> <p>IESE Business School at the University of Navarra in Spain features a Department of Business Ethics, as well as an integrated approach to incorporating ethics in the program.</p>
CSR	<p>The University of California-Berkeley Haas School of Business has an exemplary offering in the area of corporate social responsibility, supported through its Center for Responsible Business.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The MBA program at HEC-Paris has a notable focus on sustainable business, including a mandatory two-day seminar on sustainable development and a specialized 8-month Masters in Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The University of North Carolina’s Kenan-Flagler Business School offers students a concentration in sustainable enterprise, as well as several opportunities to work on real-world sustainability consulting projects with corporate partners.</p> <p>The Johnson Graduate School of Business at Cornell University offers an MBA major in sustainability, including a 10-day “bootcamp” course required for students who choose to focus on sustainability.</p> <p>The Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan offers students the option to pursue a dual MBA/MS degree in cooperation with the Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise.</p>

Figure 5. Some notable practices in teaching ethics

Source: (Christensen & Peirce, 2006).

Ethics and Leadership Teaching and Learning Trends

Past higher education teaching and learning trends in leadership and ethics

It is important to take a look back and see where professionalism and teaching and learning ethical methodologies have emerged from. Refer to Dr Patrick Dixon speaking at an international conference on the Future of Education: educational trends, syllabus, learning, exams, teachers - Futurist keynote speaker (Dixon, 2008).

Historically ethics was taught to address the issues at that time. However, to develop and adapt teaching of ethics current teaching and learning strategies should be aligned to current developments.

Current higher education teaching and learning trends in leadership and ethics

With emerging economies and technological trends moving at such a fast pace, teaching and learning strategies are continually evolving. With this in mind, as the world is changing, what trends are effective that meet current challenges?

Table 1. Schools that Require Classes in one or more Topical Areas.

FT Ranking	School	Required Course						
		Ethics	CR	Sustainability	Global CR	Leadership & Ethics	Ethics, CR & Sustainability	Ethics Other Top
1	Wharton	✓						
2	Harvard	✓			✓			
3	Stanford	✓			✓			
4	Columbia	✓					✓	
5	London Business School	✓						
6	University of Chicago	✓						
7	NYU Stern	✓						
8	INSEAD	✓						
10	MIT Sloan	✓						
13	HESE	✓						
14	IMD	✓						
15	University of Michigan Ross	✓						
16	UC Berkeley Haas	✓						
17	Northwestern Kellogg	✓						
18	York University Schulich	✓						
21	CEIBS - China	✓						
22	HEC Paris	✓						
24	RSM Erasmus University	✓						
25	University of Toronto Rotman	✓						
26	University of Virginia Darden	✓						
27	IESE - Spain	✓						
28	Duke University Fuqua	✓						
29	University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler	✓						
30	Lancaster Management School - UK	✓						
31	University of Western Ontario Ivey	✓						
32	Michigan State Broad	✓						
34	SDA Bocconi - Italy	✓						
35	University of Cambridge Judge	✓						
36	Georgetown University McDonough	✓						
38	University of Maryland Smith	✓						
39	University of Illinois Urbana Champaign	✓						
41	Carnegie Mellon Tepper	✓						
42	Penn State Smeal	✓						
44	McGill University	✓						
45	NYU Marriott	✓						
47	City University - Cass - UK	✓						
50	Boston University	✓						

Source: (Christensen & Peirce, 2006).

Innovative higher education teaching and learning activities in leadership and ethics

A paradigm shift in thinking includes introducing integrity testing as a tool to objectively analyse the level of ethics and leadership in an organisation. A flipped classroom approach involves changing the instructional strategy into a blended learning approach. Reversing “traditional education arrangement involves delivering instructional content, often online, outside of the classroom and moves activities, including those that may have traditionally been considered homework, into the classroom.” (Lakmal & Dawson, 2015, p. 4).

Technological developments and virtual gaming

Innovative techniques are being employed to enhance distant learning modes by introducing virtual gaming methods in order to exercise and further develop cognitive and critical thinking skills e.g. strategy games, character simulations, and community development games such as Sim City.

Business simulators and Incubators developing leadership and ethics for entrepreneurs

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) objectives need to be continually assessed and incorporated into the current changing curriculum that meets the required changes expected when analysing graduate attributes. These are required in changing environments when searching for new ways of developing ethical leaders and professionals. Business simulations and incubators provide a simulated parallel experience for an individual entering the workplace.

Professional apprenticeships, internships and ‘job shadowing’ in the workplace

Practical skill with knowledge and experience is important in order to master opportunities that exist in current changing environments. Theoretical knowledge coupled with practical experience assist in resolving issues and challenges where gaps are evident in teaching, learning and the workplace. Work

Integrated Learning (WIL) activities in collaboration with industry or in the workplace are important to bring the real world into the classroom.

Volunteering and excursions to inculcate empathy and a focus for ethical leadership

Volunteer work during vacations can bring empathy and understanding and encourage environmental consciousness and a sense of social responsibility in a future ethical leader.

‘Live’ case studies for ethical decision-making practices in a business context

According to Neill (2015), the question whether ethical leadership can be taught by observations in the outdoors and in the field is investigated. Outdoor education reveals itself as having a minefield of potential. For example, in relation to waste management, the most commonly discussed ethical issues involve weighing up the relative human and ecological benefits. The garbage that is strewn up and down in many African communities is not morally justified. Students are not taken into environmentally sensitive areas for their benefit as they may cause damage to that particular environment.

Case studies have generally been the norm as a tool to encourage a certain level of working integrated learning experiences. ‘Live’ case studies are being used to encourage learners to develop a holistic view in a practical manner. Combining a real outdoor experience or excursion with case analysis enhances the overall work integrated learning experience. Examples thereof include, visits to Robben Island (Cape Town, South Africa) with a parliamentary tour together with interactive case study discussions. Alternatively, a visit to Ushaka Marine World (Durban, South Africa) with a debate around business experiences in an amusement park would be valuable. Others include, introducing conferences in game parks or environmental excursions discussed in the form of a case study after researching further information before participative discussions, presentations or debates.

Educating utilising various forms of entertainment to teach value-centred principles

The combination of entertainment with education (‘edutainment’) is being utilised to reach various audiences. In the environmental industry the relevancy of this is evident. Simulated games minimise the risk of depleting scarce resources or affecting the “green” environment.

What constitutes ethical and responsible behaviour?

According to the Department of Social Development (Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Organisations, 2001) when dealing with others, non-profit organisations are expected to conduct their operations ethically and should behave responsibly. While the application of the following standards and principles might vary from one organisation to the next, they remain a good place to start:

Fairness: Just and equal treatment of individuals being tolerant and accepting diversity and privacy.

Transparency: Being open and honest in a reasonable manner.

Honesty: Includes truthfulness and sincerity.

Fidelity: Friendship and loyalty in adversity, support, and devotion to duty.

Responsible citizenship: Involves lawfulness, participation, social consciousness, and public service.

Caring for others: Compassion, giving, kindness, and serving.

Respect for others: Being courteous and decent by showing respect for human dignity.

Pursuit of excellence: Embodying being diligent, reliable, industrious and committed.

Accountability: Accepting responsibility for decisions, and consequences.

Integrity: Involves being principled and honourable.

Promise keeping: Fulfilling promises and commitments.

Safeguard public trust: To safeguard and advance the integrity and reputation of all organisations.

Research Methodology

Literature was adopted in order to investigate the value of teaching and learning trends in community ethics and leadership. A literature search was conducted across a variety of journal databases. The search was filtered to include publications in English, which were written and published in the last two decades. All databases were searched using the following keywords: Leadership, Ethics, Integrity Testing, Corruption, Amnesty, and Sustainability.

Analysis of the data included a literature review by way of a desktop study. Research outcomes included books, journal articles and internet sources from various local, regional and international databases. These databases provided the foundations for ethical thought and authoritative sources related to ethics, leadership and sustainable development trends globally. Chen (2012), cogently argues that morality, virtuousness, and character serve as building blocks for sustainability leadership amongst others which supports the authors' philosophies related to the antecedents and outcomes of sustainability and sustainability leadership.

Research Themes

With reference to the literature reviewed it is evident that ethics throughout Africa is at a crossroad. In crossing the rubicon, we have to review interventions that will impact on future sustainability on the African continent.

The desktop study findings highlighted the fact that to ensure trust between nations, it is important that a common 'golden thread' needs to be observed by all leaders throughout the African continent. Leaders of nations not meeting codes of good practice should be addressed by the relevant authorities accordingly. Leadership best management practices must emerge in order to be aligned to international standards and international law.

In many of the countries across the world ethics has been watered down to a point that in many cases it is acceptable that 'anything goes'. Africa needs to decide on a standard set of common values, moral code of best practices and overall attributes that graduates need to emerge with from higher educational institutions for the common good of all societies going forward.

The foundation of ethical thought and sources of authority in this area may need to be revisited. Internet, social media and virtual interaction poses a great threat to the upbringing of our children even at a very young age. The extent of a growing threat with regards to influences either through film, television or from the internet is becoming more problematic. Cybercrimes and distortion of information is becoming a growing problem and the trustworthiness of various websites is now questionable.

Recommendations

'In-the-box' thinking

According to Chen (2012), in light of the current environment where the Cartesian view and cynicism still dominates, it is incumbent on scholars in organisational studies to extend their reach into areas that represent a flourishing of higher human attainment.

Mismanaging community resources will directly impact poverty which is expected to rise during the 21st century. The irony is that Africa is rich in natural resources, yet is still lacking

in ethics and leadership which can result in and impoverishment. Bannatyne (2005).

Historically ethics was taught to address the issues at that time. However, to develop and adapt teaching of ethics, current teaching and learning strategies should be aligned to current evolving curriculum developments.

'Outside-of-the-box' thinking

Ethical leadership starts at the top and bottom, be it African heads' of state or in the home environment (parents and the community at large). There is a need for moral and political education in Africa in order to ensure the advent of sustainable development. Sustainable development can only be engendered by ethical political leadership. This idea of holistic moral education is a necessity given that leaders emerge from the people.

It is important that Africans form a stakeholder's forum to ensure that crime, fraud corruption that lead to corrupt outcomes be continually monitored. Searching for a common balance is required. As far back as 1997, major interventions in the leadership crisis and nation building ethics and spirituality, rooted in the African spirit of Ubuntu which values the community, humanness and wellbeing of every person must be revisited along ethical values for understanding inherent African codes of good practice. (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997). Spirituality rooted in respect and love for the other, alongside trust, authenticity, humility and peace among others will liberate the country. This ensures for sound ethical foundations with ethical standards and professionalism that is comparative to any world partner.

According to Rossouw (2005, p. 5), the Kenyan, Mauritian and South African codes take the lead in venturing deeper into what the governing of ethical performance entails with regards to strategic African leadership focusing of ethics going beyond developing a code of good ethics and practice. An anti-corruption project within the private sector that targeted the supply side of corruption was launched in Ghana by the African Capital Markets Forum (ACMF). It highlighted the role the private sector plays in sustaining corruption by offering bribes to officials.

As far back as 2003, the launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) should have "a positive bearing on enhancing corporate governance in general and business ethics as an integral part thereof. The aim of the NEPAD initiative is to eradicate poverty and foster socio-economic growth through democracy and good governance" (Armstrong, 2003).

'Without-the-box' thinking



Figure 6. The 'Diamond Deal' for community development in South Africa.

Source: (Rippon, et al. 2014, p. 5).

In order to implement new ideas and change paradigms this involves the 'cutting of a diamond' approach for fine tuning niche management strategies for community development, business, governments and societies which need to be integrated. This strategic approach results in an integrated strategic management model developed to assist community leaders to facilitate community development in South Africa.

A number of South African community leaders are not applying best practices to managing, resources efficiently in their environments. Evidence of poor results achieved by local, district and metropolitan municipalities throughout South Africa has been noted.

At the core of each stakeholder's forum represented in "The Diamond Deal" is a focus on ethical leadership from the various organisational structures. Ethical leadership allows for a trusted team of community stakeholders at grassroots and nationally that display integrity and professional ethics whilst serving their communities bottom-up and top-down.

While some argue that bribery and corruption is embedded in the business culture of Africa, the tide is fast turning where ethics and legislation combine to combat such criminal activity with unlimited fines and prison sentences for those who do not comply. At the centre ethical leadership change is certainly cracking down internationally on bribery and corruption, not only in one particular country, but in organisations doing business with a specific country. Education in Africa must concentrate on the emergence of leaders who are not just intellectuals but are also people of sound moral integrity.

Conclusion

The commitment of African leaders to the welfare of the people they govern will definitely affect the peoples' commitment to their fellow citizens and to the State at large. Integrity testing that is standardised across the continent can assist with highlighting issues needing attention in the various governments, businesses and civil society organisations currently threatened with a 'virus' of corrupt activities. Interventions have to be instilled similar to an amnesty for corrupt offenders or 'truth commissions' that hopefully bring perpetrators of such acts back into wanting to be honourable citizens.

Many African countries on the continent are dealing with roots that are evolving due to value systems accepting forms of corruption and bribery. According to Marshal (2015), despite anti-corruption and bribery legislation being in place, the problem seems to be growing in Africa. Marshal mentioned that according to a recent survey by the anti-corruption organisation, Transparency International, in four out of six countries people paid bribes to speed up service delivery, while in South Africa more bribes were paid to avoid problems with the authorities.

Often unethical behaviour will result in losing trust of others or those that look up to us. It is important to set an example as leader for fellow Africans and curriculum development needs to include ethics and professional teaching, learning and innovation that cut across all programmes going forward.

If Africans are rooted in good foundational values which are principled-centered with regards to leadership ethics common to all countries on the continent based on intrinsic values that regenerates a moral foundation that is integrity driven. Ethics and leadership which instills a universal code for an evolving Africa and contributes to developing a future desired state for community victory for the next generations going forward will result in a renewed ethos embedded in an innovative future ethical leader.

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