EvaluLead Framework Case Study Series

A Cross-case Evaluation Design for Leadership Development Interventions

May 1, 2002

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PLP is funded through cooperative agreement HRN-A-00-99-00012-00 with the United States Agency for International Development.

Background

Research methods are emerging that inform evaluation of leadership development. Those working in leadership development in the global health community must move to understand the effects of their interventions. In order to develop evaluation systems for leadership programs, we must begin by exploring the phenomenon of leadership in real, context-relevant, situations. The case study method of inquiry offers techniques for such a challenge. Robert Stake (1995: xi) writes,

> We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.

PLP will use a cross-case evaluation approach to explore case-specific effects in-depth, and, contribute knowledge to the growing community of leadership practitioners and donors.

Purpose

Based on desired outcomes articulated in PLP's Results Framework, Leadership Framework, Curriculum, and the EvaluLead Framework, PLP will produce five program-specific case studies by project-end. The overall purposes of the case studies are:

- To establish concrete documentation of PLP's contribution to project strategic objectives and intermediate results.
- To determine outcomes and indicators of leadership development interventions through context-bound cases.
- To establish general conclusions and best practices through cross-case analyses of leadership interventions.

Case Definition

A case can be defined as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context," where there is a particular focus of the study, such as an individual (Miles and Huberman: 25). PLP refines this definition to mean the site where an individual, or collection of individuals, have received leadership content in training and/or non-training interventions for application while on-the-job as a Fellow or staff person within USAID, Washington and Missions.

PLP provides interventions that reinforce a definition of leadership as "a process of creating engagement with others in action oriented toward meaningful change." Five context-bound cases will be written by project-end (June 2004). Allocation and emphasis of these five cases is based on the volume of PLP's direct cost investments across the project where leadership interventions are applied. For example, at least three case studies will be focused on one particular individual and the effect of the interventions received with at least one of those based in a Mission, and, at least one case study will involve a team of individuals receiving

organizational consulting interventions. A fifth case will reflect PLP's efforts to enable successful Fellowship placements. PLP will invite individuals to participate in cases. PLP will strive for anonymity, however keeping in mind that interpretations and conclusions of readers cannot be controlled directly by PLP. While each case is context-specific, a cross-case design and analysis will be used to seek broader conclusions.

Case Scope

Based on real-life individual scenarios, the objectives of each 5-8 page case study are to:

- Describe the leader's specific **context**;
- Expose leadership **dilemma(s)**;
- Examine the purpose and desired outcomes of the PLP leadership development **intervention(s)** applied;
- Determine related leadership actions and their **outcomes**;
- Summarize **key indicators** emerging from the case;
- Generate **conclusions** from each case for program learning.

Using the EvaluLead Framework as a guide, the evaluation process incorporates both *evidential* and *evocative* approaches as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Approach	Purpose	Methods	Sample Outcomes
Evocative	Uncover meaning by examining relationships and learning in-depth.	In-Depth Interview/Conversation Text Analysis Ethnographies Narrative/Stories/Vignettes	Changes in: Values Vision Self-Awareness
Evidential	Determine successes and areas for improvement based on numeric and/or physical evidence.	360 Feedback Survey Pre/Post Intervention Static Retrospective Reviews Experimental Designs	Changes in: Skills Strategies Policies

Data will be collected and analyzed as grounded in the six *outcome element* domains. Outcomes will be identified as associated with the relative *levels of effect* (individual, organizational, and societal/community). Following a narrative account and presentation of key data for each case, key points are analyzed and presented. PLP will explore each component of each case using the following goals, questions, and approaches:

Context

Goal: To describe the real-life setting in which the individual(s) commonly find themselves, both physically and emotionally, so that a reader can understand the setting in a way that clarifies the true nature of achieving successes and overcoming challenges faced.

Key Questions: a) How do you think leadership would be defined in your current work context? b) What successes are possible in this context, and why? c) What barriers to success are present in this context, and why?
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: Tape and/or quotes; Open-ended questioning with probing sub-questions for clarification and embellishment; Narrative (e.g. "Thick Description" (Geertz)).

Dilemmas
Goal: To describe a current issue that the individual is facing, so that a reader can understand the issue in a way that exposes the multiple dimensions of the issues and parties involved, and suggests possible options for resolution.
Key Questions: a) Describe one very specific issue or dilemma that you are currently facing that requires your ability to lead. b) Who would be involved (and how) in developing a plan for eradicating this dilemma? c) What are the possible options for resolution from your perspective?
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: Tape and/or quotes; Open-ended questioning with probing sub-questions for clarification and embellishment; Narrative (e.g. "Thick Description" (Geertz)).

Interventions
Goal: To determine the purpose and desired outcomes of the leadership intervention(s) the individual(s) received, and the extent to which the individual(s) applied knowledge gained from those interventions.
Key Questions: a) What specific interventions did the individual(s) receive? b) What were the stated purpose and desired outcomes of those interventions and to what extent were they achieved? c) How did the individual(s) apply key aspects of those interventions, if at all?
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: PLP Event Evaluations, Online Journaling, Close-ended Questioning and description; Graphs, Tables, Quotes.

Outcomes
Goal: To expose the specific outcomes present or not present by the individual(s) based on their perceived relationship to the intervention(s) received, so that a reader can understand what outcomes and at what level (individual, organizational, societal/community) they were present or not present.
Key Questions: a) What specific actions did the individual(s) take? What changes occurred for the individual(s)? b) How did the change occur? c) Is there evidence of this change? If yes, present or describe. If not, describe why.
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: Routine 360, Numerical Leadership Actions Gap Analysis, Online Journaling (Narrative and Numerical Markers), Close-ended questioning and description, Open-ended questioning and description; Graphs, Tables, Quotes, Stories. Key outcomes analyzed and placed on EvaluLead Framework.

Key Indicators
Goal: To delineate indicators of change based on the interventions and outcomes of this particular case.

Key Questions: a) What indications of change were clearly present in this case? b) At what level did they emerge? c) Is there a strong logical relationship between the outcomes we found and their indications?
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: Textual analysis; extrapolation; meta-analysis where appropriate; Presentation in a table showing relationship to intervention, outcome, and EvaluLead categories.

Case Conclusions
Goal: To provide conclusions as to the effect of the predominant interventions for the purposes of program improvement at both the strategic and tactical levels.
Key Questions: a) What must be considered, based on the findings of this case, as to how PLP delivers leadership interventions? b) What specific actions can be recommended as to improving or sustaining the context described in this case?
Suggested data collection, analysis, and presentation: List conclusions with specific recommendations for action.

Cross-case Approach

The categories above will be investigated and presented using a "cross-case" design. Miles and Huberman (1994:172) write,

> One aim of studying multiple cases is to increase generalizability, reassuring yourself that the events and processes in one well-described setting are not wholly idiosyncratic. At a deeper level, the aim is to see processes and outcomes across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations.

PLP will employ a "stacking of comparable cases" approach, using the elements described above as parameters for analysis and display of findings across cases. Using a meta-matrix display, cases will be analyzed and presented in-depth, as well as the elements outlined above. Variables within the elements will be compared. A second analysis will be done to synthesize interacting pieces of narrative for interpretation of universal meanings, most appropriate for those elements where narrative techniques are employed (e.g. Context, Dilemma, Outcomes). Data from the "Outcomes" category will be analyzed and sorted to appropriate domains on the EvaluLead Framework. PLP will contract a small number of independent field researchers to assist with data collection and analysis. The PLP team will collectively interpret the data along with the independent field researchers to draw conclusions and make recommendations for PLP and USAID.

References

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