

Compassionate Leadership in Voluntary Sector Organisations and the Integration of Forced Migrants

Dr Hack-Polay DIEU DONNE

Résumé

Cet article examine la place du secteur non gouvernemental dans le processus d'intégration des migrants forcés en Grande Bretagne. Il examine comment le *leadership compassionné* amène ce secteur à obtenir des résultats extraordinaires, alors que beaucoup d'autres organisations humaines et sociales trouveraient difficile d'atteindre si elles n'étaient dotées seulement que des maigres ressources dont bénéficient les groupes non gouvernementaux. Se focalisant sur l'expérience d'une organisation mère et de ses satellites opérant dans la région de Berkshire (Royaume Uni), l'article identifie des initiatives de succès qui ont contribué à satisfaire les besoins émotionnels, sociaux et professionnels des migrants. L'article conclut que le secteur non gouvernemental produit ainsi un exemple de bonne pratique qui pourrait largement inspirer d'autres secteurs d'activités. Cette conclusion aboutit à un appel à l'allocation de plus de ressources à de telles initiatives qui préparent les migrants à la citoyenneté.

Abstract

The paper examines the place of the voluntary sector in the integration of forced migrants in Britain. It examines how compassionate leadership drives the sector to achieve tremendous results that many other human organisations could find hard to achieve with the scarce resources available to voluntary organisations. Focussing on the experience of a small organisation and its satellite groups in Berkshire (United Kingdom), the paper identifies successful initiatives addressing the forced migrants' emotional, welfare, training and employment needs. The voluntary sector, thus, provides good practice that could, in many respects, inspire other sectors. The paper concludes that such initiatives that prepare forced migrants for active citizenship need more support from public bodies and larger charitable trust.

This paper examines how compassionate leadership in voluntary sector organisations and how voluntary actions contribute to the successful integration of forced migrants in the host society. The paper also examines the importance of strong leadership on creativity and innovation within refugee-assisting voluntary organisations, with regards to refugee training and employment.

The integration of forced migrants is important for various reasons. The issues facing forced migrants are well documented. Lin (1986) has spoken of forced migration as psychological and social disruptions. Many others authors have contributed to the examination of the conditions of refugees throughout the world. Whether in developed or developing nations, refugees tend to be seen as outcast and undesirable. Thus, formal government actions to assist forced migrants are limited in most receiving countries.

It has often been voluntary organisations and charities that organise schemes geared at integrating forced migrants in host societies. Well known initiatives in the United Kingdom are run by the Red Cross, Refugee Council, Refugee Action and numerous smaller and local agencies ranging from formally established charitable organisations to self-help groups. Usually such organisations lack financial and human resources but strive to operate adequate service levels that are responsive to the needs of their vulnerable clients.

In other terms, voluntary organisations have cultivated and grown a culture of doing more with less and helped a multitude of people to rebuild new lives in exile. This benevolent humane devotion is what could be referred to as *compassionate leadership*. It is not easy to define compassionate leadership because this has been a concept extensively explored by the academic literature. Leadership has mostly been addressed in the political, military and business literatures, and as such has not often considered the compassionate dimension. Some of the tentative definitions encountered have their origin in charitable and religious

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

organisations. Gospel Light (2007) for instance describes compassionate leadership as leadership that is filled with “generosity, believing in people, meeting needs, encouraging friends, getting excited about good things that happen to others and challenging people to draw close to God. These are the steps to compassionate service...and compassionate leadership”. This definition is one that resemble others which mostly see compassionate leadership as being about caring for one’s engagement with other’s issues, passionate, driven to serve and identifying itself with the needs of others (Servant-Leader Associates, 2007; Page 1998).

In many respects, compassionate leadership is viewed as the type of leadership model needed in refugee-assisting voluntary organisations (Page, 1998).

The contribution of voluntary agencies has often not been stressed enough. The devotion of women, men and young people who help the transition to new citizenship requires more prominent acknowledgement. This article aims to provide a modest contribution towards such recognition. The study of refugee integration cannot ignore the leadership strategies of the multiplicity of voluntary agencies involved because they can influence how effectively refugees can integrate their new societies.

METHODOLOGY

The research has focused on a refugee-assisting organisation, the Slough Refugee Support Group (SRS) in the UK in 2003. The organisation is referred to as ‘the focus organisation’ throughout the paper. It is one of the key agencies in the county striving to help forced migrants rebuild their education, training and professional experience and social and psychological life in exile. Founded in the late 1990s, the group has gone from a small group of volunteers to become a charitable organisation and is now run by over 40 people, including non-paid volunteers. It provides various services including welfare advice, educational courses and advice as well as befriending to help relieve the psychological effects of exile.

Semi-structured interviews involving face-to-face contacts were conducted with 21 respondents, enabling the researcher to listen to the experiences of both staff and users. Respondents included 3 paid staff, 4 volunteers and 14 users. The development manager and two other paid staff were interviewed. The paid staff sample was imposed by its availability. Four volunteers were interviewed because in many respects, they were regarded as integral part of the staffing although there were restrictions on the duties that volunteers could perform unsupervised. Their regular presence within the organisation indicates certain knowledge of organisational values, culture and practices relevant to the research. The client sample comprised 9 men and 5 women. Eight clients were interviewed outside of advice sessions and the others in different locations. The development manager and volunteers facilitated access to ensure that the clients trusted the researcher.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership

The extensive interest in leadership today derives from the necessity to cope with fast changing business environments of the 1980s and 1990s dominated by high competition and recession. Redman & Wilkinson (2006) argue that leadership is of particular importance in the organisation and Crainer (1996:179) summarises the importance of leadership in business and management in the following terms:

Leadership is the great intangible of the business world. Yet, most agree that leadership is a vital ingredient in business success and that great leaders make for great organisations).

Leadership is the quality or skill which is much needed – or rather talked about - in modern business. It is important to have a glance at the origins of leadership literature before examining what leaders are and what makes leadership so singular in contemporary management thought.

The origins of the practice of leadership are not easy to trace. Cazeneuve (1976:148) argues that in history there does not appear to have existed societies without hierarchy. The existence of hierarchy and

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

stratification in every human society leads to accept that there have always leaders and followers. In recent history, two major models seem to have been more consistent in establishing systematic ideas of leadership. These are the Machiavellian and the military models. Modern leadership theories developed from these views.

Machiavelli (1913), in *The Prince*, explains that the Prince as a leader must “keep his men well-organised and drilled to follow incessantly the chase”. Thus, the Machiavellian leader is pictured as one who, using pretension and power, comes to get his subordinates to do what s/he wants defines as right so as to achieve the objective. Commanding and organising are central in Machiavellian leadership which is authoritarian as opposed to most contemporary models in which the leader is more democratic. However many of these theories remain deeply influenced by Machiavelli's ideas.

The other historical leadership model is the military current. The re-emergence of leadership on the agenda in the 1980s followed the military model, portraying business leaders portrayed as general whose role is to enthuse and motivate corporate troops. Slim (1956) and Adair (1988) are particularly known for their strong military approach to leadership. The common and most important element is the capability of leaders to raise morale in their people. Slim (1956) believes that morale is “that intangible force which can lead a group of people to put their last energy in the work in order to achieve a goal”. This means that the leader, having motivated and persuaded his “troops” (employees or subordinates) of the legitimacy of the common goals, they all devote their strength without counting the cost to themselves.

Modern leadership thinking differs from the Machiavellian and military inspired model in that for most the practice of leadership involves a great deal of “consensus seeking” and an ability to motivate. Glass (1996:207) argues that “in negotiating with groups you have to think much more about maintaining relationships”.

For De Vries (1994), for instance, leaders have the ability to excite people in their organisations and work hard themselves. They recognise their failures in order to remedy them by appointing the right people. In this perspective, the new leader is one who empowers his employees to do the job. Thus delegation becomes a key quality of the leader. An interesting aspect that De Vries identifies is that leaders, like products, have a life time limit: leaders rise, develop and fall in decline. Great leaders do not remain on in organisations beyond their “practical usefulness”. This analogy encapsulates the principle of democracy in leadership.

These dimensions are explained by Leonard Sayles. Sayles finds that leaders facilitate co-ordination and integration in order to have the work done. But more significantly, “leaders adopt, modify, adjust and rearrange the complex task and function interfaces that keep slipping out of alignment” (1996:184). Similar ideas had already been developed by Brech in the 1960s. Brech (1967) argued that the leader is involved in several tasks such as giving orders and instructions, answering queries, giving advice, reprimanding, motivating, supervising, making judgement, co-ordinating. The leader also allocates tasks and chooses the methods.

The idea of the leader inspiring, motivating and aligning workers is also deeply embedded in Burn's (1978) and Kotter's (1990) work. However, in modern time, an influential leadership guru is believed to be Bennis. Bennis (1985) argues that leadership is a skill learned by managers willing to put in substantial effort but it is fundamentally different from management. He further puts that “to survive in the twentieth century companies will need a new generation of leaders, not managers”. He draws a radical separation between management and leadership.

Bennis argues that leaders “conquer the context, the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that sometimes seem to conspire against us and will surely suffocate us if we let them, will the manager surrender to it”. Some critiques like Crainer (1996:189) find that “it has become something of a catchphrase, another in a long line of neat aphorisms which do not, in the end, bring the practitioner nearer to how to actually develop leadership skills”. However, the idea of leaders as conquerors of the volatile environment is relevant to voluntary sector leaders and this is the line that the rest of the paper pursues.

In summary, the analysis of leadership thinking shows that leaders generally do not only predict or forecast future developments but they also enlighten the way and strive to deliver the organisation from evil.

1. LEADERSHIP IN VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

There have been attempts to make a case for the need to see leadership differently in the voluntary sector because the voluntary sector is a discreet area of work within the economic environment. But what specificity has the voluntary sector so as to command a different leadership activity? What is leadership like in the voluntary sector?

1.1. Nature of the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector is defined as the sector of activity that does not fall in the private or public sectors. The voluntary sector is an incredibly vast field with organisations of varying sizes and purposes. Others term it the non-for-profit sector concerned with the provision of welfare and other charitable services like education, health, housing campaigning, etc. Adirondack (1992) reveals that,

It is not in any way homogenous. It encompasses the small group of local women coming together to support each other through a miscarriage, and international agencies such Save the Children or Greenpeace (...) groups with no paid workers and others with hundreds of employees

Handy (1976) provides a useful typology of voluntary sector organisations. His typology includes three main categories. *Mutual support organisations* connect people with similar issues and problems so that they benefit from each other's experience. That may be the starting point for most voluntary organisations that become larger in the future. *Service delivery organisations* employ several people and provide formal services to the needy. *Campaign organisations* erect themselves as pressure groups that lobby politicians and other authorities for a cause.

Though useful, Handy's (1976) typology is not comprehensive and Clutterbuck & Dearlove (1996) have added three more categories. For the latter authors, there are three other types of voluntary sector organisations that do not fall within the categories identified by Handy. Fundraising organisations are concerned with raising money to donate to other voluntary groups. Fundraising organisations may not undertake practical field activities themselves as their primary purpose is to raise funds, which deliverer organisations may not have the staff, resources and time to do. Grant-making organisations exist mainly to distribute funds which they either receive from fundraising organisations, or legacies from former members or the public. Trading organisations are similar to business organisations but whose profits entirely go to charitable purposes.

The focus organisation studied in Berkshire, as most voluntary organisations in the UK, is primarily a service delivery organisation but combines many other functions such as campaign, mutual support and fundraising. The organisation in order to deliver its services to customers raises its own funds from various sources, e.g. local authority, charitable trusts, National Lottery (now Community Fund). The organisation campaigns on refugee issues at local and regional level and has an input in national campaign led by larger agencies like the British Refugee Council. It organises mutual support groups for and run by refugees themselves and co-ordinates befriending services which fulfil similar function. The variety of purposes of voluntary organisations leads to the thought that a seventh type of voluntary sector organisation exists, which has been overlooked by Handy (1976) and Clutterbuck & Dearlove (1996). This seventh category is the *multi-function organisation*, which may combine two or more of the functions identified by the authors. In practice, many voluntary organisations fall in this seventh category of organisations that provide services, campaign and/or provide mutual support, fundraise, make grant to others, trade, etc. The hybridity of the latter category represents their very strength because it is difficult for many voluntary organisations to survive by doing just one thing. Multi-functionality commands particular types of leadership and management in the voluntary sector.

1.2. Leadership in the voluntary sector

Clutterbuck & Dearlove (1996) provide an interesting account of what they think the attributes of an effective voluntary sector leader are. They interviewed a number of leaders in the voluntary sector and came up with traits that govern effective leadership in the sector. The major attributes in their research suggest that the good voluntary leader should show credibility, entrepreneurship, inspiration and ethics.

It is thought that the success of the group derives from leaders' ability to develop and maintain *credibility* in the eyes of his/her followers. Credibility in this sense is seen by Kouzes & Posner (1993) as leadership that "is consistent with the principles and values articulated by the leader, and is genuinely respectful of the intelligence and contributions of followers". This, for Clutterbuck and Dearlove (1996:25), means that:

Leaders must first be clear in their own minds about their values and standards and be confident that they have the competence to deliver what they believe in).

It may be added that the values and standards that community leaders are to deliver are part of what they agree with their community base and followers. Without such an agreement or contract and communication of the values, implementation of the leader's values may be problematic because such values are not shared and possibly understood.

Entrepreneurial leaders are characterised by innovation and openness to new opportunities and the ability to translate ideas into actions. Voluntary leaders watch the internal and external environments and develop readiness to seize opportunities that present to them. These may include new funding opportunities, less expensive but equally effective training and development activities for themselves and their members. Effective voluntary leaders also learn from the successes of other groups and have enormous forecasting and planning abilities.

The *inspirational* leader's way of behaving, working and seeing often inspires others. People look to the leader for not only directions but also examples. By inspiration, it is meant here motivation that is developed in others because the leader gives the right example, acts as a role model. For instance, a leader who can demonstrate knowledge and example by doing can also inspire members to follow in his footsteps. As Clutterbuck & Dearlove (1996:28) point out:

In voluntary organisations, which are often under-staffed and under-resourced, that extra spurt of inspired effort is often what makes the difference between success and failure.

Many voluntary and community projects have been disbanded or attracted the wrath of funders because of the lack of *ethics*, especially when dealing with financial resources. If funds are made available to run a project, the leader has to make the management of such funds transparent. How the money goes to each bit of the project should be publicised and made available to members and the management committee. Effective leaders, if they should receive payment for an activity the payment is set reasonably in consultation with the group. This avoids suspicions and increases the credibility of the leader.

1.3. Learning from leadership in the voluntary sector

Clutterbuck & Dearlove (1996:34) provide evidence that demystifies traditional suggestions that voluntary management is often unprofessional and amateurish. They reject the assumption that it is always the voluntary sector that has to learn from the private sector and advocate that the private sector has something to learn from voluntary organisations. They are certainly relieved at the thought that the latter is now being recognised. The example of the National Westminster Bank shows businesses can learn from the voluntary sector. The bank has benefited from the leadership experience of the voluntary sector. From observing voluntary sector practice, the organisation has come to change its culture. Managers have learned the multidisciplinary approach of the voluntary sector managers and leaders. This is very perceptible in an activity like event management where National Westminster Bank's managers

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

have learned the wholesome approach of the voluntary sector leaders who deal with the whole process of running an event, for instance, from planning to execution as opposed to the fragmentation of the private sector.

The research has sought to test these leadership traits and experience in a voluntary sector organisation to see how far their application has enabled the organisation to grow and become more effective in service delivery.

2. INTEGRATION OF FORCED MIGRANTS: TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Training and employment could be two important indicators of the successful integration of forced migrants in the host society. There are national trends in refugee training and employment. Below we consider some recent trends.

2.1. Education and Training

Education for refugees in Berkshire, as in most of the UK, is provided by traditional providers such as colleges and adult education centres. College provide courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These are accessible to asylum seekers and refugees. Apart from those courses which have a more focus on newcomers and asylum seekers, most others are mainstream provision and asylum seekers and refugees are only "welcome" to apply, with little special incentives.

Adult education centres run by local authorities provide a number of courses in ESOL, information technology and creative activities. Although not specifically geared at refugees and asylum seekers, the courses are appealing given the large number of minorities and newcomers who use adult education centres. Besides, these large providers, small agencies and voluntary organisations run training and educational courses which appeal to refugees and asylum seekers because they are often specifically designed for them and take into account cultural diversity. The focus organisation is one of these voluntary agencies that have extensive educational service provision in Berkshire.

Education and training services for forced migrants is characterised by basic provision mostly to meet language and communication needs and training initiatives, in many instances, are not tailor-made. The culture of "they are welcome to use the service" is still strong though many studies have suggested that educational and training initiatives should be culturally sensitive and user-friendly to refugees and asylum seekers in order to increase their participation.

2.2. Employment

In employment, refugees face many difficulties. They are not allowed to work while their application for asylum is being considered by the Home Office. Those receiving positive decisions find it hard to get a job because of difficulties which are many-fold. A large number have language and communication problem because the ESOL courses they may have done could only have been at basic level and do not always allow for the acquisition of high level of communication skills adequate for the workplace or for advanced studies. Refugees' qualifications and experience are not always recognised in the host country, and the issue is greater for those who do not have the originals of the qualifications obtained.

Other issues that hinder the employment prospects of forced migrants include the lack of awareness about the UK job market and application processes and lack of confidence. Discrimination, in all its forms, is not to be ignored. Refugees do not only face the problems minorities in the UK face, they face added disadvantage because of the stigma of being refugees.

3. VOLUNTARY SECTOR LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

As argued earlier, there are various forms of voluntary organisations, ranging from formal charities to small self-help groups. In the refugee assistance field, they have a clear common ground which is translated in their aim, which is to provide practical help to refugees. To achieve this aim, the organisations have developed integrated strategies due to the rapid changes occurring in the legislation on

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

refugees. By integrated strategies, it is meant the combination of determined strategies - long term planning - and emergent strategies - short term actions to respond to unpredicted changes (Clayton, 1997:16-18). The focus organisation's integrated strategy involves multiples aspects but five particularly are at the core of leadership and include recognition of the value of human resources, emphasis on communication, creativity and action, co-operation & co-ordination and marketing.

3.1. Best assets: human resources

Voluntary organisations can claim to have the right people, people with the compassionate nature in line with the sector's business strategy and purpose. Many staff members are volunteers and in the refugee field, a large number of volunteers are refugees. There is little problem of motivation as most staff, being refugees themselves, are already motivated by the fact that they are working for people of similar condition. The organisations rely strongly on human resources and believe they are able to achieve the stated aims at present and in future years. This belief is founded on the experience and commitment of the staff and volunteers who are the organisations' most important assets. To maintain the quality of these human assets and increase their capacity to perform, regular training and development programmes are organised for all. It was the view of volunteers that the consistent training, including induction and on-going training and supervision, enables them to acquire good knowledge and skills to deal with a wide range of situations. A long term volunteer supported this view in those terms:

I am a retired woman and wanted to do something to help people in need. I wanted to volunteer for a few months and see but I've now been here for two years. Here the people nurture the volunteers. You feel that you are doing something useful but also that people in charge treasure the work we do

Having placed human resources as primary resources, voluntary organisations set to improve efficiency by improving internal communication. Effective communication is achieved by the institution of a newsletter and other briefings. They hold regular meetings to which volunteers are invited. Such involvement led to increased commitment, providing a sort of psychological contract not only between the volunteers and their managers but also between volunteers and clients. This approach to leading people demonstrates that voluntary sector leadership and compassionate leadership are mostly participative leadership in which, for Howell & Costley (2003), leaders involve their community of followers in the decision-making process.

3.2. Creativity, co-operation and action

Many internal and external changes have taken place but the council has been able to manage them because, as the Chief Executive of the British Refugee Council put, "the organisation remains at the forefront of innovation and expertise in refugee issues" (BRC, 1996:1-2). Some of these changes are dealt with in the next section.

This plays an important part in realising most of the organisation's action plan. The voluntary group works closely with numerous refugee groups in the local area. Their work therefore fits in the nationally co-ordinated refugee work in order to manage the effects of legislation changes in the 1990s and early 2000s.

3.3. Tireless fundraisers or beggars?

Emphasis on *marketing and fundraising* is a major strategy. It is understood that without selling the company's image and ideas to the outside world it would be difficult to operate effectively, the organisation being mainly dependent on grants from various sources. Marketing enables the organisation to be known and this facilitates fundraising activities. It is worth stressing again that many voluntary organisations start as a small group of volunteers who are sympathetic to the problem of a particular client group. As a result of leadership effectiveness, voluntary organisations receive positive comments both from politicians and the public which staff are very proud of. For instance, a Berkshire Labour MP said of the voluntary organisation studied in the research at an annual general meeting:

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

The Group is a very active organisation that plays a vital Role in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the town.

These supportive comments reflect customers' feedback reported later in this section. However, despite the good intention, hard work and strategies put in place, it is important to recognise that there are issues and challenges that leadership is faced with in the voluntary sector. The next section examines some of these issues and leadership responses.

4. CONSTRAINTS OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Legislation

All staff interviewed saw new asylum legislation as complicated, making it difficult to advise clients. Legislation on the entitlement to benefit, education and housing is complex. Some categories of asylum seekers (those applying for asylum after entering the country) for instance are not entitled to cash benefits and must therefore apply to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), a government body set up to run a parallel welfare system for asylum seekers. The total entitlement under the NASS system is said to be worth only 70% of normal benefit packages. Legislation makes it impossible for asylum seekers to apply to study at university and some higher education courses. While no law or regulation bans asylum seekers from applying to universities but the rule on fees restricts such moves. Asylum seekers, while awaiting a decision, are liable for higher fees in universities. This means that an asylum seeker applying to university will have to find around £6000 per year to fund their studies, which is almost impossible. The Development Manager explained that:

The fact that asylum seekers cannot work when they are awaiting a decision presents several difficulties. This means that we cannot find them work placement when they come on our training courses. This is a serious constraint.

The above is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to asylum regulation. In reality there are far more regulations around the freedom of asylum seekers. For instance under some legislation some asylum seekers are detained while others sent to dispersal areas throughout the country. This makes it difficult to assist clients and see their progression through. Another aspect of legislation bans asylum seeker from working until they have got a positive decision on their asylum application. In practice many asylum seekers wait a long time for a decision and have no possibility of doing neither education nor work. The impact of legislation is that it restricts the rights of asylum seekers, their entitlement. It makes the work of refugee agencies harder as to providing adequate services. The impact of legislation has been immense on the provision of training and employment services to asylum seekers.

4.2. Funding for voluntary sector organisations

Funding in the voluntary sector in general remains a big issue. Voluntary organisations rely on grants from statutory agencies and trusts. There is a lengthy and hard process of fundraising. In addition to under-staffing, voluntary organisations need to devote effort and time on fundraising. If it is not done, the service might not be there at all next year. As the development manager of the focus organisation acknowledged:

Fund-raising's hard and time consuming. It requires not only filling the funders' application forms but also research to find evidence to support the bid.

4.3. The issue of staffing

Staffing is an issue because there are few paid workers. Volunteers are often dedicated and highly motivated individuals. They give their time without compulsion from management. However, because volunteers are there for a limited amount of time, and they may leave anytime, it is a challenge for leadership to ensure that they have access to a pool of volunteers so that the service and its level are adequately maintained should a volunteer leave at short notice.

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

It is an added bonus if an organisation has a paid staff devoted to particular task with all the responsibility, training and authority to make an impact in the workplace and in the community. Partners regard the worker differently depending on whether it is a volunteer or a paid staff. In many instance, volunteers do practical jobs on-site, e.g. advisers, befrienders, childcare workers, kitchen helpers, cleaners, administrative workers, etc.

4.4. Premises

Voluntary sector often leases buildings from local authorities. Initially when the focus organisation moved in the premises were ideal. It was their own premises where they could develop activities to meet the needs of customers in confidence. However, soon, with the increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers coming, the location became small. This is something that all the staff interviewed pointed out. However, there is little the voluntary sector could do about without major financial implications. In fact, moving to bigger premises would suggest more money paid in rent and other service charges. This is not affordable to many organisations, particularly smaller ones. Funders are reluctant to fund the cost of premises or building. The difficulty is reflected in the words of an Administration Manager:

It's not easy to get money for core funding. Most trusts are willing to fund activities relating to client services but not management and administrative expenses. But without covering those it's difficult to provide an efficient service.

5. DELIGHTING THE CUSTOMER AGAINST THE ODDS

Customers are the ultimate judges of service quality and effectiveness. As quality is defined by customers, the voluntary sector does not escape the scrutiny of their customers. In the research none of the clients interviewed did not speak of negative memories of the services they received. This is an indication of compassionate and humanistic leadership. The customers rather portrayed the voluntary organisation studied positively.

5.1. Place of friendship and familial environment

Within organisations assisting forced migrants, most clients or customers may have left their countries, friends and families back home due to coercive factors. For many the only place to come to in order to experience or re-live social human experience is the local refugee-assisting voluntary group. Customers appreciated the warm welcome by staff. A number of customers termed the focus organisation's premises 'a familial place'. A Sikh asylum seeker said eloquently:

I've been coming here for two and a half years. When I have problems they help me. It's like a family here and I don't feel lonely when I'm here."

A Somali refugee added:

When I come here they give me tea, coffee and friendship; they make me feel at home.

Words and comments like these clients' demonstrate the extent to which services provided by voluntary groups touch the hearts and lives of users and are valued. Organisations add this dimension to their formal service because it helps make other provision more effective. For instance, in the focus organisation, leaders recognised that without such a friendly or 'familial' atmosphere, activities like the Job Club, Mum's Club and English language classes would attract a low turnout. The voluntary sector often provides integrated services that meet both clients' psychological and social needs.

5.2. Place of help

Most refugees and asylum seekers are destitute, particularly since the late 1990s when cash benefits and other entitlements as documented earlier were withdrawn for a large number of them. The clients would therefore come to their support group for advice, welfare information and assistance. The system is

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

complicated and it is not always that the clients understand their rights. Advisers in the voluntary sector advise on rights and entitlements and help complete relevant forms. Staff and volunteers speak to welfare agencies on clients' behalf, particularly as many do not speak English competently. Customers appreciate this significant assistance and their gratefulness was expressed by interviewee from Burundi who told the researcher:

Staff take time to fill these forms for me. They telephone the DSS to sort out my problems. I know I couldn't do this myself. I'm very happy about them.

In a county like Berkshire there are few places refugees could turn to for assistance and socialising. Indeed, nationally small voluntary agencies fill a huge gap. They are at the heart of the community and close to individuals and groups. Such organisations represent maternal or paternal figures in the eyes of service users. Given their vital importance some funds are often allocated by government bodies but these are limited and restricted.

5.3. Place of opportunities

Unemployment rate among force migrants is hugely disproportionate compared to the national average in the UK. Nationally, the unemployment rate is 5.3% (IDS Statistics, 2006) but this is around 70% (Bloch, 2004) among forced migrants. Many clients therefore come to the voluntary groups for assistance with jobsearch, including advice on vacancies, completing application forms, CV writing. Although none of the clients interviewed in the focus organisation reported finding a job yet, many were confident about future prospect with the help of the organisation they in dealing with. Clients also found the English language classes largely beneficial. The culture-sensitiveness of the provision made it easier for both men and women, young and older learners to attend. There were classes to accommodate difference.

One of the interviewees who found a part time job through the refugee agency explained that:

I would not be able to put together a CV if these people (volunteers from the refugee agency) had not helped me. I never worked in my country and I was not familiar with CV writing. They also helped me to apply for the job I'm doing now. I really thank them.

The voluntary agency assisting refugees is often perceived as a place of opportunities that could help rebuild their broken lives. Although most of the clients interviewed were not working then, they thought in the long term the educational, training, social and other assistance received would pay off. Another female respondent said:

It was only there that you could find out about volunteering opportunities which could give you experience; you also talked to other people who are in the same situation as you and that make you feel better.

5.4. Service that makes a difference to lives

Clients and staff including volunteers believe that strong compassionate leadership drives the voluntary organisation. Clients were more appreciative of the human side of the organisation, highlighting qualities such friendship, welcoming, helpfulness, and the sense of home and hope they are led to experience. Clients appreciate the fact that they are not dealt with by the unpaid volunteers only but also by managers. Human and social contacts are essentials that forced migrants, particularly newcomers, need to build confidence, self-esteem and make sense of the new environment. This sense of humanism was clearly expressed by an Iraqi female respondent attending the Mothers and Toddlers' group who thought that

At least here you feel that you are between people.

The rediscovery of social life, or 'people', contributes to the psychological healing process (Hack-Polay, 2006) that could ponder successful socialisation and integration. A volunteer interviewed expressed this challenge more meaningfully when she argued that:

L'ESS face à ses responsabilités

If we want these people (the forced migrants) to be off social welfare benefits, unleash their potentials and bring valuable contribution to our society, we need to start preparing them now. We need not see them as tourists or people in transit because many will be permanent members of our society one day.

The verdict clients deliver on the voluntary organisation is tremendously positive and does not translate mere politeness to their 'Good Samaritans'. The clients were interviewed in different locations, both on the focus organisation's premises and in other venues. But the views converge in the appreciation of the quality service they receive.

CONCLUSION

Voluntary organisations harness compassionate leadership, which is leadership not for profit, leadership filled with humanistic values. They develop strategies to achieve their aim and have a strong culture of doing more with less. In this respect, organisations from other sectors, including business, could learn from voluntary organisations.

Voluntary organisations operate in an environment dominated by unpredictable change. They are the poor parents of economic life, having to rely on benefactor funds to operate. Particularly in the refugee-assisting sector in Britain, organisations have been faced with tremendous changes in immigration and asylum legislation in the past decade, which have brought destitution to their client group. The removal of entitlement to cash benefits and educational provision for asylum claimants in the late 1990s exemplifies this. Although facing numerous difficulties and influenced by external factors coming from the political, social, legal realities, the voluntary sector develops visionary, creative and imaginative leadership that often overcomes barriers.

Advice and guidance, charitable collection, recruitment campaigns to hire volunteers are some strategies put in place to successfully challenge the adverse effects of the external environment. In this respect Bennis's (1985) statement that 'leaders conquer the volatile environment' is a living experience in voluntary sector leadership. Despite resource constraints and low pay, leaders in the voluntary sector have faith in the enterprise and seek to achieve the aim with resources available. Such resourcefulness is rarely seen in many human organisations. If businesses were faced with the situation the voluntary sector operates in, most would be declared bankrupt and go out of business. It is no surprise that in Britain a respectable bank like the National Westminster bank sent their managers to be apprentices of voluntary sector practices which they thought could enrich their business (Clutterbuck & Dearlove, 1996:35). An internal survey within the bank indicated that employees who served as voluntary school governors, trustees and management committee members in voluntary organisations developed 'developed their leadership skills as a result of their involvement'.

Difficulties that voluntary agencies face, such as funding, premises, staffing issues, etc. are not viewed as sources of organisational incapacity but become learning points and have led the leaders to be resourceful, innovative and solution engineers and continue to deliver what they believe in. Are these not lessons for all? Closer attention must be paid to the needs of voluntary organisations assisting forced migrants and the clients because they ultimately become national resources. Compassionate leadership could represent a determinant of successful integration and citizenship for new immigrants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adair, J** (1988) *Effective leadership: a modern guide to developing leadership skills*, Pan, London
- Adirondack, J** (1990) *Just about managing*, London Voluntary Service Council, London.
- Bennis, W** (1989) *On becoming a leader*, Addison-Wesley, Reading.
- Bennis, W** (1985) *Leaders: the strategies for taking charge*, Harper & Row, New York.
- Bloch, A** (2004) *Making it work: refugee employment in the UK*, Institute of Public Policy Research, London.
- British Refugee Council** (2000) *Credit to the nation: a study of refugees in the United Kingdom*, BRC, London.
- British Refugee Council** (1996) *Asylum and Immigration Act 1996*, Factfile, September, BRC, London.
- Brech, E F L** (1967) *Management, its nature and significance*, Pitman, London.
- Burns, J M** (1978) *Leadership*, Harper & Row, New York.
- Cazeneuve, J** (1976) *Dix grandes notions de sociologie*, Seuil, Paris.
- Clayton, S** (1996) *Sharpen your team's skills in developing strategy*, McGraw Hill, Maidenhead.
- Clutterbuck, D & Dearlove, D** (1996) *The charity as a business: managing in the public sector, learning from the private sector*, Directory of Social Change, London.
- Crainer, S** (1996) *Key management ideas: thinking that changed the management world*, Pitman, London.
- De Vries, M K** (1994) "CEOs also have the blues" in Crainer, S (1996) *Key management ideas: thinking that changed the management world*, Pitman, London.
- Drucker, P** (1954) *The practice of management*, London, Harper & Row.
- Gospel Light** (2007) *Compassionate leadership: rediscovering Jesus's radical leadership style*, <http://www.gospellight.com>, Accessed 29/03/07.
- Hack-Polay, D D** (2006) *Metaphors and narratives in exile: understanding the experiences of forced migrants in Britain*, PhD thesis, University of Surrey, UK.
- Handy, C** (1976) *Understanding organisations*, Penguin, London.
- Howell, J P & Costley, D L** (2003) *Understanding behaviours for effective leadership*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- IDS Statistics** (2006) *Employment and unemployment: latest figures released in June 2006*, <http://www.incomesdata.co.uk/statistics/statempl.htm>, accessed 04/07/06
- Kotter, J** (1990) *A force for change: how leadership differs from management*, Free Press, New York.
- Kouzes, J M & Posner, B Z** (1993) *Credibility: how leaders gain it and lose it. Why people demand it*, Jossey Bass, New York.
- Lin, K M** (1986) "Psychopathology and Social Disruption in Refugees" in Williams, C & Westermeyer, J (eds.) *Refugee mental health in resettlement countries*, Hemisphere Publishing Co, Washington DC.
- Machiavelli, N** (1513) "The Prince" in Crainer, S (1996) *Key management ideas: thinking that changed the management world*, Pitman, London.
- Page, M** (1998) *Compassionate leadership: a question of gender? The experiences of women managers in refugee organisation*, Evelyn Oldfield Unit, London.
- Pascale, R** (1990) *The art of Japanese management*, Penguin, London.
- Redman, T & Wilkinsom, A** (2006) *Contemporary human resource management*, FT/Prentice Hall, London.
- Servant-Leader Associates** (2007) *Compassionate leadership: the work of servant-leaders*, <http://www.servant-leaderassociates.com/Servant-Leader/CompassionateLeadership.htm>, Accessed 29/03/07.
- Slim, J W** (1956) *Defeat into victory*, Cassell, London.