RESULTS-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP THROUGH A PERSPECTIVE OF IMAGINATION AND ABUNDANCE

TYPE**:** Paper

CONTACT PERSON: Amaranta Karssiens

AUTHORS: Amaranta Karssiens, Claartje van der Linden, Celeste Wilderom and Wessel Ganzevoort

CONTACT INFORMATION:
A.E.A. (Amaranta) Karssiens, M.A.
    R.A.A.K. Consultancy B.V.
    Zutphenseweg 37
    7211 EA Eefde
    The Netherlands
    +31 (0)575-549638
    a.karssiens@raakconsultancy.nl

C.S. (Claartje) van der Linden, M.Sc.
    R.A.A.K. Consultancy B.V.
    Zutphenseweg 37
    7211 EA Eefde
    The Netherlands
    +31 (0)575-549638
    c.s.vanderlinden@gmail.com

C.P.M. (Celeste) Wilderom, Ph.D.
    Dept. of Information Systems & Change Management
    School of Management and Governance
    University of Twente
    PO Box 217
    7500 AE Enschede
    The Netherlands
    +31 (0)53-4894159
    c.p.m.wilderom@utwente.nl

J.W. (Wessel) Ganzevoort, Ph.D.
    Dept. Business School-Management
    University of Amsterdam
    Roeterseiland 11
    1018 WB Amsterdam
    The Netherlands
    +31 (0)20-5255233
    j.w.ganzevoort@uva.nl

RESULTS-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP THROUGH A PERSPECTIVE OF IMAGINATION AND ABUNDANCE

Amaranta Karssiens, M.A.
R.A.A.K. Consultancy B.V.
(The Netherlands)

Claartje van der Linden, M.Sc.
R.A.A.K. Consultancy B.V.
(The Netherlands)

Celeste Wilderom, Ph.D.
Dept. of Information Systems & Change Management,
School of Management and Governance
University of Twente
(The Netherlands)

Wessel Ganzevoort, Ph.D.
Dept. Business School-Management
University of Amsterdam
(The Netherlands)

INTRODUCTION

This article is about a particular perspective on results-oriented leadership through a perspective of imagination and abundance. Firstly, we will describe and define this unique perspective on leadership. We will then show how this construct relates to current literature. Subsequently we shall demonstrate, how a leader can make this perspective his own by means of a leadership development programme. We'll show what this perspective can mean in everyday organizational practice, using a number of quotes from interviews with twelve participants in a leadership programme based on this perspective. We conclude the article with a short reflection on the leadership perspective we have described.

LEADERSHIP: CREATING RESULTS FROM IMAGINATION AND ABUNDANCE

In our perspective on leadership, practical tasks play a central role, combined with the development of unique leadership capacities or capabilities. This means that acting, producing results and reflection form the basis of leadership development. We do not base ourselves on a more or less objective measure for leadership, to which one should conform (a 'measure of good leadership'). Nor do we base ourselves on a theoretical statement about leadership, which someone must internalize.

Our perspective is all about developing the quality of being able to be present with reality (a 'way of being'), and, from this quality, being able to successfully execute a task in the organisation. It however does not see leadership as a set of individual competencies or personal characteristics, as a result of which one can be more or less fit for the leader's role; e.g. as in the work of Manfried Kets de Vries (e.g. Kets de Vries et al., 1993).

Our perspective does connect with Scharmer's *U-theory*. One can create change by reacting to challenges with solutions. This is the most superficial level of change. One takes change incrementally to more significant levels by greater focus (creating new structures and practices), broader perceptions (new core activities and processes), and deeper exploration of assumptions (new thinking and principles) (Scharmer 2007). Developing this ability to be present with reality while executing a project can also be associated with *action learning* (Revans, 1998). Later in this article we'll go into this in greater depth.

Another assumption in this perspective is that a leader always acts in a particular context. Leadership only unfolds in the course of executing a task; in interaction between the individual, the group and the organisation. Here we follow Agazarian (1982), in using 'role' as a bridging construct, to better understand the relationship between individuals and groups.

The notion 'way of being' is comparable to Carl Rogers' idea of 'being human,' to which he refers in *A Way of Being* (Rogers, 1980). In the leadership programme, coaching around 'way of being' is a very detailed exploration, which has impact on the entire range of interactions of an individual with his environment.

We entertain six basic assumptions, on which our perspective on results-oriented leadership is based:

1. There is a connection between organizational results, 'ways of being' and behaviour. Changing 'ways of being' will produce different results.
2. There is a connection between mind and matter: the world appears to me in the way I see the world. In the same way, my 'way of being' causes specific results.
3. In terms of 'ways of being,' we distinguish between 'never ending games' and 'being possibility.' 'Never ending games' show up, for instance, in 'yes-but…' conversations, which tend to be unproductive. 'Being possibility' is connected to the half-full glass and will generate other results than the 'way of being' in the 'never ending game.'
4. The 'poetic argument' allows you to enter 'being possibility.' This 'poetic argument' is possible when touching the heart is accepted and taken seriously, next to rational thinking. The 'poetic argument' allows for a liberated 'way of being,' by seeing the world as it is ('what is') instead of an interpretation of 'what is.'
5. We use our own definition of results-oriented leadership.
6. In order to gain access to results-oriented leadership, one has to acquire an inquisitive attitude.

In the second part of this paper, we will return to these assumptions: when we describe an OD-like intervention for leadership enrichment, designed as a results-oriented leadership programme.

The Relationship between Result, 'Way of Being' and Behaviour

So, our perspective on leadership is based on the relationship between three elements of a totally different order: to create a result; 'way of being;' and behaviour (see figure 1).

Development of potential manifests itself in behaviour and in a measurable result in the organisation itself. One can differentiate between acquiring behavioural skills, channelling one's 'way of being,' and measurable result in the work content; we focus on all three dimensions simultaneously. We consider these three dimensions as 'one package.' The relationship between 'way of being', result and behaviour is illustrated in figure 1.
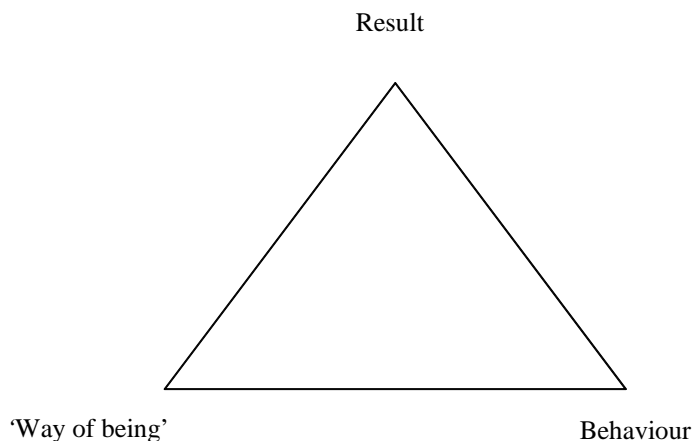

Result

'Way of being'   Behaviour

Figure 1 The relationship between 'way of being,' result and behaviour

While behaviour and result are clearly visible and measurable, 'way of being' is an invisible, intangible and frequently ignored dimension. We'll firstly focus on the notion of 'way of being,' before moving on to two of its specific manifestations.

'Way of being'

'Way of being,' the way we exist in and react to the world around us, is the source from which all our behaviour stems, and where intentions and attention reside. The totality of thoughts, convictions, opinions, images, experiences, emotions and physical constitution constitutes, at any given moment, a specific 'way of being.' This 'way of being' then is the source from which we act and undertake activities. It consists of more than only rational thoughts and emotional reactions. 'Way of being' is also

related to the quality of attention and concentration, and expresses itself in the way in which we observe, listen, feel, speak and act. It is like a painting, which expresses who the artist really is.

An individual's invisible 'way of being' however manifests itself in observable behaviour and concrete results. So, in order to gain insight into our 'way of being,' we can examine these visible dimensions, behaviour and result. The image we thus form is in itself a sort of reflection, which shows us from which 'way of being' we ourselves have observed, thought, spoken and acted.

'Way of being' is a dimension which is not addressed in many management training courses. Mostly they present only a loose collection of skills and tools which one can acquire, which is in itself of course valuable. We are adding the dimension 'way of being', to create a binding factor for the otherwise separate skills and tools.

The Relationship between 'Mind' and 'Matter'

An individual's 'way of being' determines the behaviour he or she will exhibit and the result which he/she will produce. This notion of the inseparable relationship between man and the surrounding world can also be found in Weick's theory concerning *Sensemaking*. Weick shows that an individual selectively perceives and interprets his impressions of the external world, so that he can make sense of his experiences of the world from his own perspective. He illustrates the relativity of human perception and shows that there appears to be no such thing as rational and objective reality.

> *'Sensemaking is not about Truth and getting it right. Instead, it is about continued redrafting of an emerging story, so that it becomes more comprehensible, incorporates more of the observed data, and is more resilient in the face of criticism'* (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstveld, 2005: 415).

In a broader perspective the world and the observer are inextricably linked. Thus, your 'way of being' determines the results you produce, just as the way you perceive the world determines what you recognize there. Varela (1999: 13) also states that 'mind' and 'matter' are directly linked:

> *'...reality is not a given: it is perceiver-dependent, not because the perceiver "constructs" it as he or she pleases, but because what counts as a relevant world is inseparable from the structure of the perceiver.'*

Thus, your 'way of being' determines the results you produce, just as the way you perceive the world determines what you recognize there.

Two 'Ways of Being'

There are many different 'ways of being'. Scharmer (2007) distinguishes four distinct 'qualities of attention', in *downloading* (repeatedly telling your own familiar story), *debating* (waiting until someone else's story fits with your own subject, and then entering the discussion by talking only about your own subject), *reflecting* (listening and observing from someone else's perspective) and *generating* (listening and observing from a greater whole) (Scharmer, 2007).

Our two 'ways of being' are in fact two extremes of the same dimension. One extreme consists of a 'way of being' which is activated by earlier judgments, opinions and convictions.
Judgments can be very useful and productive. When someone unexpectedly hears a loud bang, and based on an instantaneous judgment immediately takes flight, this may prevent serious harm done. A 'way of being' which is above all based on fixed judgments and opinions can, however, be a hindrance to productive cooperation. In this context we are talking specifically about the judgments which every person incorporates in the course of his life. These are convictions about oneself, the other or the environment, such as 'I must keep everything under control', 'I'm not doing it well enough', 'I don't belong' or 'I must always be the winner.'

With a 'way of being' activated by such entrenched judgments and opinions, an individual also unconsciously works from an assumption of limitation and scarcity, and behaves accordingly. The economists Jansen and Jägers (2007) describe this as the *scarcity perspective:*

> *'The assumption of scarcity assumes that one person will profit from another (less powerful) person, unless he/she is restrained by an even more powerful force in society'* (Jansen and Jägers, 2007: 19).

In this 'way of being' everything is focussed on having and keeping power and being right. A concrete manifestation can be seen in the 'yes-but…' conversation. It is a repetitive form of conversation, which demonstrates stereotypical behaviour based on deeply-rooted convictions.

This what we call 'never-ending game' is a constantly recurring form of discussion marked by patterned behaviour deriving from a fixed 'way of being…. The 'never-ending game' is marked by this type of 'yes-but' discussion and is essentially a power struggle which begins with a persistent negative judgment.' The 'never-ending game' consumes a great deal of energy, generates irritation and is highly unproductive. It is comparable to *scripted behaviour*, as described in transactional analysis (see for example Harris, 1975; Kouwenhoven, 1983). Argyris (1986: 74) uses the term 'skilled incompetence':

> *'The ability to get along with others is always an asset, right? Wrong … And it's the very adeptness that's the problem. The explanation for this lies in what I call skilled incompetence, whereby managers use practiced routine behaviour to produce what they do not intend (incompetence).'*

This 'very adeptness' is 'skilled incompetence' simply because it is counterproductive. It prevents the individual from observing, listening and feeling openly and without prejudice. This means that one is not present with the reality of the here-and-now. This 'never-ending game' is essentially an addictive power play, which begins with a persistent negative judgment and with thinking in terms of right and wrong. The associated defensive routine behaviour comes from a sense of perceived threat.

On the other hand, a 'way of being' can also be based on being wholly in the here-and-now, armed with imagination, abundance and trust. Seen from this 'way of being' the future presents itself as opportunity, instead of a potential threat. The individual is aware that he is a part of this opportunity. Borrowing from Jansen and Jägers, we call this the 'abundance perspective'. By interacting and cooperating from this perspective all parties can emerge as winners and, in the context of power constellations, coalitions can be formed through trust and abundance (Jansen and Jägers, 2007). The 'way of being' which occurs in an 'abundance perspective', we call 'being possibility.'

This 'way of being' is far from self-evident, as judgments, limitations and thoughts of isolation and scarcity are so solidly rooted in the mind. The scarcity perspective and the associated 'never-ending game' are addictive. Letting go of fixed judgments appears to generate considerable anxiety, also among leaders.

Accessing Imagination, Beauty and Abundance

We'll now describe how gaining access to the 'being possibility' state is related to imagination, beauty, abundance and the so-called 'poetic argument.' We introduce a working definition of leadership, and the necessity of acquiring an inquisitive attitude.

One can access a state of 'being possibility' by awakening the senses, by examining what one sees, hears and experiences in the here-and-now, by accepting what is *really* happening; in other words 'what is.' This is what we mean with 'being present with reality.' This means that a person learns to see the difference between 'what is' and his own – seemingly rational – interpretation of what he thinks there is; the difference between the inner world (interpretations) and the external world ('what is'). Only then it becomes possible to take note of the emotional tension which this distinction inevitably brings. Important here is that this distinction be allowed to exist, and not be seen as something which needs to be changed by fighting it. Only then does it become possible to really see the seemingly rational assumptions, opinions and expectations, for what they are and to not let them remain the determinants of behaviour. Space is created, for imagination, beauty and future possibilities and opportunities.

Kessels calls the unexpected leap into this space to 'being possibility' the 'poetic argument' (Kessels, 2006). It is the argument of art (Kessels, 2006:13):

> *'Only when you have been touched by someone or something, addressed at a different level than that of your routine thoughts, only then you can step away from the familiar, trusted images. It is being touched, which opens your eyes – the path to insight leads through the heart.'*

He describes this remarkable type of experience, in which assumed truths about the environment and oneself suddenly reveal themselves as illusions. Fears appear ungrounded. Ratio is overtaken by the experience of beauty. Compassion is allowed to enter. Everyone will have experienced such a moment, for instance when listening to a beautiful piece of music, or looking at art. The rational mind is silenced,

one feels one exists and is totally absorbed in the experience. Another 'way of being' has presented itself. A sense of peace, freedom and clarity is created. Suddenly it is possible to make clear choices, where previously one only experienced confusion and doubt. The unconscious need to manipulate has disappeared. Conversations show a new quality of sincerity, the acumen and lustre of life return.

One of the participants in the leadership programme describes how he experienced the difference between routine, 'fixed' behaviour and acting from a 'being possibility' 'way of being:'

> *'...also greater insight into the behaviour of my children, for example. In the past I was very quick to become angry with my children. [This leadership programme] could well have been a turning point, yes, in that I much less often react angrily now. I am much more inclined to observe: gosh, why do you do that? What is it that drives a kid to react as he reacts? ... There were days in which he didn't dare to go upstairs by himself. I used to think: nonsense, I'm busy now, I'm not going to walk upstairs with you. And I would react angrily.*
> *But now: "Don't you want to go upstairs alone?" "No." "Shall I walk with you?" "Yes." Then I stop with whatever I'm doing, go upstairs with him, sit on the stairs where he can see me, while he gathers his things and I can go down again. Problem solved. And I think: why in heaven's name did I always react so angrily before? Being negative doesn't solve anything.'*

Creating Innovative Results from Leading with Imagination and Abundance

In our definition of leadership we stress thinking, perceiving and listening from the point of view of the 'glass half-full' and a 'being possibility' 'way of being.' By doing this, we incorporate an ethical aspect in our perspective.

Leadership is about… :
  a. … *developing the ability of 'being possibility' by letting go the need of 'being right'...*
  b. … *creating possibilities for a group of people, moving them to action and producing a new result together...*
  c. … *creating leaders around you by steering towards four attitudinal aspects of leadership: commitment, responsibility, being in relationship, and integrity...*
  d. … *developing a flexible behavioural repertoire, deploying behaviour as befits the situation.*

a. … *developing the ability of 'being possibility' by letting go the need of 'being right'...*

In Scharmer's U-process (see also Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers, 2004; Hassan, 2006) lots of possibilities show up, when someone examines his assumptions in relation to 'what is'. Characteristic for this process is gaining access, from time to time, to an unconditional 'way of being'. This entails being able to act without needing recognition in return, therefore unconditionally.

An unconditional 'way of being' is a total package, which consists of an 'open mind' (letting go of judgments and opening your spirit), 'open heart' (letting go of cynicism) and 'open will' (being unconditioned and making choices without being guided by fear) (Scharmer, 2007). These dimensions make clear, that more than rational intelligence is required, in order to realize an essential change from within. It also requires the intelligence of the heart and of the will.

An important characteristic of gaining access to 'being possibility' is that it is a process which unfolds slowly, from examining one's 'way of being' in specific situations. In this introspection, without using judgmental terms like 'good' or 'wrong,' it becomes apparent that for most of the time we act in a conditioned and conditional manner: conditioned in the sense of acting and wanting to receive recognition in return.

'Being possibility' is something in which one can train oneself through disciplined inquiry. It is something which one can occasionally experience. By disciplined training one can in the longer term become more flexible and will experience it more often.

b. … *creating possibilities for a group of people, moving them to action and producing a new result together…*

Creating possibilities means using your imagination and visualizing. By binding yourself to such a visualization, you inspire activities in the present (see also *Appreciative Inquiry*, for example in Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). This kind of imagination and inquisitiveness can be related to the imagination through the eyes of a child: open, creative and with the ability to be amazed. When, as a leader, you are yourself a 'possibility,' when you translate this into behaviour and think in terms of possibilities, you offer your team members a chance to call on their own talents. Then really innovative

results can be realized. A leader cannot predict the future, but can give it shape. By looking at what you can work on together, you create new realities by seeing the same and changing your perspective (see Kahane, 2004).

> *Learning from the future involves intuition. It involves embracing high levels of ambiguity, uncertainty and willingness to fail. It involves opening ourselves to the unthinkable and sometimes attempting to do the impossible. But the fears and risks are balanced by feeling ourselves part of something important that is emerging, that will truly make a difference'* (Scharmer, 2007: xvi).

c. … creating leaders around you by steering towards four attitudinal aspects of leadership: commitment, responsibility, being in relationship and integrity…

1. *Commitment:* choosing for a specific result *and* not being attached to it. Choosing is something different from deciding, one's heart is involved.
2. *Responsibility:* does anyone know what his or her contribution to the achievement of a result is? Is he or she aware of the facts and does he or she acknowledge how it differs from one's own expectations, feelings or opinions?
3. *Being in relationship:* Is someone, independent of the task at hand, in relationship with his staff? Is he in touch with these people and is he aware of what is going on?
4. *Integrity:* Is someone true to his word? Does he stick to his agreements? Integrity means: acting consistently with one's commitments within a specific time frame.

We mention four attitudinal aspects of leadership here, which provide handles for leaders and enable them to guide from a distance, so that they do not become too immersed in the contents of a task. These four attitudinal aspects of leadership also contribute to a productive 'way of being' of both leader and team member. What exactly happens when one lets go of this sense of threat which belongs to the 'never-ending game'? Choices become clearer, and energy is channelled into one's own priorities. Energy is not wasted in interactive stress, resulting from the false notion that it is important to appear better than someone else. Moral values such as authenticity, integrity and generosity show themselves. The other is granted his place under the sun. Jealousy, aggression, greed, pride and ignorance can, through 'being possibility,' dissolve into responsibility for others and for one's own existence.

These four attitudinal aspects are also practical. They help the leader to direct team members and to offer them the opportunity to develop themselves. The question is, what do you focus on when you want to direct and delegate effectively? Of the four, commitment is primary: without will there is no way. In our experience commitment is a prerequisite for productive work. Collins calls it a feature of good leadership: the combination of personal humility and professional will (commitment) (Collins, 2004). If someone fails to choose for something, the other attitudinal aspects will also score low.

Responsibility can be positioned close to commitment and is more personal. It's about assuming responsibility for one's own life. It is the first ground rule in the concept of generative leadership as described by Callens (2004), who in turn borrows from theme-centred interaction as described by R. Cohn. The term accountability lies close to responsibility in meaning and is mentioned by Maister as being essential for leadership (Maister, 2008).

The attitudinal aspect 'being in relationship' concerns the interaction between persons and creates a link between the individual, his choice for a task and the execution of the task in the environment. It can also be associated with servant leadership: during the execution of a task, having an eye for the people involved in the task (the human aspect).

Acting with integrity within a commitment steers a project forward in the daily setting. In this sense it is more practical in nature and therefore of a different order than the three previous aspects.

d. … developing a flexible behavioural repertoire, deploying behaviour as befits the situation.

It is through behaviour that form and substance is given to one's 'way of being.' Behaviour is visible on the outside, and can be heard in words and observed in non-verbal behaviour. For a leader it is important that he is flexible in his behaviour. A leader must be able to exhibit 'giving space' behaviour: to listen, paraphrase, ask open questions and be open about himself. He must be able to show 'sharing space' behaviour: inspiring others by painting a picture of a possible shared future. He must also be able to exhibit 'taking space' behaviour: making clear proposals, saying what he wants and negotiating.

Behaviours can be learned. It is possible to learn to ask open questions, paraphrase or be clear about what you want. Insight into one's 'way of being' can only be gained by asking oneself questions, by being prepared to let oneself be surprised and amazed.

Training for Leadership: Developing an Inquiring Attitude

How can one make the type of leadership described above one's own? We have discussed awakening the senses and experiencing beauty and compassion. In this section we shall approach it from the perspective of inquisitiveness, and of becoming aware through the senses.

We already talked about 'being possibility:' this 'way of being' is created when one is emotionally touched by the 'poetic argument.' How can one reach the state in which it is possible to experience this 'poetic argument?' Being curious, searching and exploring all contribute to its creation.

The type of leadership which we are discussing is not easy to acquire. It requires a laborious process in which you sometimes do, but also very often do not, experience what it is really about. You experience it in a flash, and then it is gone: it is an on-again, off-again process. In our opinion 'being possibility' requires daily exercise and training in exploring and being aware. This exploration is done through the senses: what do I see, hear and feel, and how am I breathing? It's about slowing down activities and letting go of opinions. It requires that one – very precisely, carefully and without prejudice – looks at something, without a pre-existent frame of reference, without fleeing into explanation, emotion or activity. A flight into explanation manifests itself as the 'never-ending game:' the 'yes-but…' discussion. A flight into emotion consists of becoming, for example, impatient or irritated, and a flight into activity manifests itself as wanting to 'solve the problem.' The ability to explore without flight is what French calls 'negative capability' or the capacity for 'reflective inaction' (Simpson, French and Harvey, 2002; French, 2000):

> ' … defines negative capability as 'precisely the ability to tolerate anxiety and fear, to stay in the place of uncertainty in order to allow for the emergence of new thoughts or perceptions' (Simpson et al., 2002: 1211).

It is from this area of uncertainty, ambiguity and non-understanding of other ways of thinking that one can, slowly but surely, gain insight into one's own 'way of being.'

In leadership the emphasis frequently lies, however, in 'positive capability,' or 'decisive action:' the ability to organize and be decisive and proactive. One of the points of tension between 'positive capability' and 'negative capability' lies in the fact that the latter requires a certain degree of humility (Simpson et al., 2002). It is about being able to examine from not-knowing, being able to explore and taste the difference. Fear and ego are put aside. It is about not letting oneself be led by the fear which creates an ego. It is about discovering, with an open and curious approach, how one can contribute to the organisation in which one works, with one's own potential and experience. If one practices perceiving, in a disciplined manner and at length, by looking, listening and feeling 'what is,' one gradually gains insight into the many and often surprising possibilities (for oneself and others) that exist.

LEADERSHIP FROM IMAGINATION AND ABUNDANCE IN PRACTICE

In the previous section we described how we look at leadership and how you can make this approach your own: by developing an exploring, investigative frame of mind. How does this work in practice? In this section we first offer a brief description of a leadership programme in which this perspective on leadership is used. We subsequently illustrate our leadership perspective in practice, using a number of quotes from in-depth interviews with former programme participants.

Training for an Investigative Approach: An Intensive, Disciplined Leadership Programme

The programme in which the leadership perspective described plays a central role, was developed over the last ten years and has thus far been carried out in numerous profit and non-profit organisations in the Netherlands. Twelve to fourteen experienced leaders and project leaders participate in each programme. In all, some 400 individuals have so far taken part.

The programme has three objectives: 1) producing a project outcome for the strategic agenda of the organisation or of a larger network, 2) motivating and inspiring a (project) team to achieve that outcome and 3) providing leaders with greater insight into the relationship between their personal 'way of being' and the outcomes of the project.
Creating real results or outcomes in a real project takes a central role during the programme.

The leadership programme consists of the following elements:
1. *Carrying out a project:* All participants provide leadership to a project which is on the strategic agenda of their own organisation during the leadership programme. Either that, or they have a

network assignment (for example, working with other parties to enhance the safety in municipal districts).

2. *Monthly multi-day training sessions*: The leadership programme consists of six monthly training sessions, a total of 132 hours. During these sessions participants are offered various concepts and exercises which are relevant to their practice of leading. These concepts, among which the triangle result, 'way of being' and behaviour, and the 'never-ending game,' gain depth during the implementation of the project.

3. *Weekly telephone coaching*: From the first training session on, all participants do participate in a weekly, half hour coaching session at a fixed time. This coaching uses a form 'coaching for results' which is filled in by the participants. The coaching conversations are about the project's progress. The coaching provides a weekly exercise in the examination of the organizational reality of the project (i.e., the concrete results achieved thus far) and one's own contribution to them (in explicit light of relevant content of the training sessions). This coaching trains for the necessary inquiring dialogue.

These training elements enhance and contribute to each other. The participants' work environment and the plenary learning or training environment are connected (Van Staveren, 2007). The tripartite design is related to Revans' action learning, in which an existing task is carried out by a group, which simultaneously learns from the experience. The program design differs from action learning, in that only the leaders participate in the programme, and in that they are provided with weekly coaching sessions focusing on project progress. During these weekly sessions the project leader also examines his own 'way of being' in the context of the progress being made on the project.

Research and Discipline in the Leadership Programme

> *'Like any learning journey, it takes time and sustained discipline, with many semblances of progress and retrogress along the way. But practitioners report that they catch glimpses that encourage them to keep striving'* (Varela, 1999: 70-71).

> *'The process of self-actualization requires discipline… We can also view discipline as being-a-disciple, as learning'* (Ganzevoort, 2007: 39).

The coaching during the leadership programme ensures the essential and disciplined training in investigating, looking, listening and feeling. Through the weekly structure the participants can become acquainted with the full extent of their patterns of behaviour and their fixed 'ways of being.' The strict structure ensures that participants cannot look the other way. It is through this discipline that, gradually, a surprising freedom emerges in the fixed behavioural patterns. Time and discipline are essential to this learning process (Varela, 1999; Ganzevoort, 2007).

The Leadership Perspective in Practice

In order to gain a better understanding of what the perspective described here actually has meant to the participants we conducted twelve in-depth interviews with participants from 2007, 2004 and 1999; four participants were selected at random from each year. The interviews were wide-ranging in nature and were held to provide impetus for future research and development. We intentionally chose participants from different years. This gave us as wide as possible a picture of the perspective in practice over the course of eight years.

Some examples of representative real-life projects, undertaken during the leadership programme:

o Project 'Free time, free activity choice.' Result sought: by the end of the management training programme youthful prison detainees are able to choose which activities they wish to engage in during the evenings and the weekends. Project outcome: the delinquents were indeed able, eleven months after the end of the programme, to make their own choices regarding free time activities with the help of a menu on a computer.

o Project 'Better with less.' Result aimed at: the implementation of a package of proposed operational measures which would offer a financial gain of €350,000 annually. The measures were to take effect by the beginning of 2008 and to limit the processing time of cases. The sought outcome was realized on the planned date.

o Project 'CNA.' Results intended: A Policy Plan with recommendations for the Presidents of the different Chambers of a Court of Justice, on how to realize an internal reorganization, entailing restructuring of processes around case loads and agendas, delegation and coaching. At the end of

the programme the participants were able to put the finished Policy Plan before the management board of the Court for further discussion and final decision making.

In this section we shall illustrate our leadership perspective, using a working definition of leadership and a few quotes from participants regarding some elements of this perspective.

Leadership is about developing the ability of 'being possibility' by letting go the need of 'being right'...
A participant is surprised when she lets go of her deeply held conviction, that she needs to keep everything under control.

> *'Because I have an enormous sense of responsibility and want to keep everything under control, I became aware that this way I give others very little freedom, while they certainly do have qualities I make too little use of. And if you start to look at this differently and also dare to let go, then you see that others can also accomplish a great deal. I hadn't been aware of that. So I practiced delegating a great deal, during the course of the project and also in another related project.'*

During the interviews it became clear again and again that another style of leadership finds expression in this kind of small examples, in which a participant ceases to be defensive and stops trying to prove herself right all the time, and instead looks for ways how to best contribute to a successful project outcome.

Leadership is about creating possibility for a group of people, moving them to action and producing a new result together…
A participant shows how he was able to create opportunities for a group of people:

> *'Then there were situations when everyone had the idea of, wow! we really are engaged in something quite beautiful. We are creating something which is rather unique, which stands out above the average. And as soon as that opportunity became clear, I literally made that the goal for which the team should go. I emphasized: guys, we are going to go for this extra result. This is no ordinary project, no, we want to make something beautiful out of this.'*

Leadership is about creating leaders around you by steering towards four attitudinal aspects of leadership: commitment, responsibility, being in relationship and integrity…
A participant talks about commitment and 'being in relationship:'

> *'What I also learned during the programme is that the term 'commitment' is extremely important. I learned to see whether people really believed in what they were engaged in, or whether they were just pretending. Are they really going for it, or do they just let go of everything as soon as they leave the room? It is important to know whether you can build on someone, or not.'*

> *''Being in relationship,' I apply that all the time now. You can see very quickly if people withdraw from a relationship. You just feel it. And I am very attentive to that, how is the contact, is it okay? And I work hard on improving it, if there is something wrong.'*

Another participant about responsibility:

> *'What I found especially valuable is recognizing and also acknowledging that you have the key to change in your own hands. Someone else is responsible for what he does and you yourself are responsible for the circle around you.'*

Leadership is about developing a flexible behavioural repertoire, deploying behaviour as befits the situation.
A participant describes how she inspires people to get to work in problem situations, not by telling her team what needs to be done, but by asking them what ideas they have.

'A huge problem is suddenly dumped on your table. And everyone expects you to find a solution for it immediately. I've learned not to go there. First I look at just what exactly the problem is. I used to be extremely solution-focused, because I like to help someone, but then you have taken the monkey on your shoulder again. Actually you should put responsibility where it belongs and let people think about the problem themselves, how big it is and what they can do about it. If you do that, you discover surprising outcomes. That way you also make people enthusiastic again, when you take them very seriously, and they get inspired by the fact that you have given them some freedom.'

THE POTENTIAL OF LEADING FROM IMAGINATION AND ABUNDANCE

What is special about the leadership perspective and the associated programme we described, is that leaders, using this perspective, learn to manage their (unproductive or destructive) emotions. This allows them to undertake effective action in their organisations, without getting themselves all wound up. The specific characteristic of the perspective is the relationship which is established between 'way of being' and the outcome produced. During the leadership programme this is expressed in the combination of gaining insight into oneself (one's own 'way of being'), being able to use different behaviours flexibly and in seeing this personal development reflected in concrete results in an organisational project. Through this leadership programme, a link is laid between the facts from the project's progress and the inner world of the leader. By acquiring an exploring, inquiring attitude in the coaching structure, space is created between the facts and their direct interpretation: the leader learns to manage his re-active emotions. This creates freedom, autonomy in connectedness and peace. Suddenly the acumen and lustre of life return in full. The result of this is that the leader works from a broader perspective, thinks more clearly, makes adequate decisions and acts effectively, also within the context of power constellations or structures. The leader doesn't allow himself to be provoked by these power structures and can choose to be Machiavelli when it serves the task before him. Conversations show a new quality of sincerity. Concretely, the impact of acquiring an exploring, inquiring attitude can also be, that conversations and meetings take less time and are more focused and that leaders are able to make clear decisions when facing insecurities. The language these leaders use is to the point and concrete, using short sentences. All these new qualities of being and behaviour manifest themselves in higher productivity. If the leader develops his inquiring attitude even further, and can combine this with observing with amazement, then he or she can create innovative results with the team. We use this leadership perspective and the programme also as an intervention for Organisation Development. Participants will tackle organisation-wide projects drawn from the organisation's strategic agenda. The programme can thereby create Organisation Development along the line of the outcomes the project, chosen from the strategic agenda of the organisation, produces. At the same time project teams have been doing real work and have, together, used a new vocabulary and an improved way of relating to each other.
This shared vocabulary creates another way of working together in the future. With this, leaders also have a language at their disposal to show team members the relationship between results and being able to develop yourself through the task. Particularly the idea of 'responsibility' and specifically acquiring responsibility within one's own work system (Hoebeke, 2004) provides a great opportunity for team members and leaders alike. Team members suddenly see responsibility as something attractive, and they tend to come up with many surprising results (Karssiens, Van der Linden & Wilderom, 2009).

In terms of further research we see the development of the quality of 'being present with reality,' and from this quality working together on a task, as in need of detailed empirical study. In such studies, themes like the following could be addressed:
- The influence of the leadership programme on the vocabulary of a participant: does a participant use a different vocabulary when discussing leadership six months after completion of the programme? If so, what is different and what effect does that have on the participant, his team, and the team's output?
- The influence of inquiry and standing still, 'negative capability,' on the task: How can introducing brief quiet moments in a working day and examining the 'way of being' of leaders, contribute to innovation in the workplace?
- Operationalize 'being present with reality' in executing a task. The elements for the quality of 'being present with reality' are: mind, voice and speech. These three aspects are derived from the Dzogchen philosophy (Norbu, 1983: 9). It means use of the senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting) and using breath to bring attention to the present and then act from there.

- o   Relate the Eastern philosophy on mind, voice and speech and on identity and ego to the Western ideas on group dynamics. All these aspects are relevant when producing a result in a team, but how exactly are they related?
- o   The influence of the leadership programme on others in the organization than the participants themselves: which impact does the leadership programme have on colleagues who have worked closely with trained leaders during a project?
- o   The role of the facilitating consultant during the programme: can anything be said about the types of interaction in which 'way of being' is addressed? What does passing on the leadership perspective described here require of the facilitating consultant with regard to capacity, skills, knowledge and his own development in the area of being? How can the key elements of this leadership programme and perspective be standardized; related to other, similar leadership perspectives; and be more easily passed on?

The essence of being able to facilitate this sort of programme lies in 'always being a beginner in precise exploration' and being able to always observe in amazement. To develop a mentality that is able to learn from one's own and the other's emotions, while not fleeing into them (in other words, high emotional intelligence). It is about facilitating from the potential offered by 'not-knowing:' especially through reflecting (listening and observing from someone else's perspective) and generating (listening and observing from a greater whole). Lengthy and disciplined schooling in silence- and breathing-techniques combined with regularly delivering this leadership programme is a condition for being able to facilitate this leadership programme.

Finally, delivering this leadership programme is no small feat; it requires disciplined and creative schooling and development in both analytical and integrative notions on (facilitating) human functioning and interaction in context.

REFERENCES

Agazarian, Y.M. 1980. Role as a bridge construct in understanding the relation between the individual and the group. Paper delivered to the 1980 Copenhagen Conference of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy. In M. Pines & L. Rafaelson (Eds.), *The Individual and the Group: Boundaries and Interrelations,* New York: Plenum Press.

Argyris, C. 1986. Skilled incompetence. *Harvard Business Review*, 64 (5): 74-79.

Callens, I. 2004. Generatief leiderschap: Het innovatieve leiderschapsmodel van themagecentreerde interactie (TGI). *Werken, leren en leven met groepen*, 21: C2600-2618.

Collins, J. 2004. *Good to great: Waarom sommige bedrijven een sprong vooruit maken… en andere niet.* Amsterdam: Business Contact.

Cooperrider, D. L. &, and Whitney, D. K. 2005. *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change.* San Fransisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

French, R. 2001."Negative capability": Managing the confusing uncertainties of change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* 14: 480-492.

Ganzevoort, J. W. 2007. *Spiritualiteit in leiderschap: Een verkenning van de betekenis van spiritualiteit voor leiderschap in organisaties* (4th ed). Nijmegen: Valkhof Pers.

Harris, T. A. 1975. *I'm ok - you're ok* (8th ed). London: Pan Books.

Hassan, Z. 2006. Connecting to the source: The U-process. *The Systems Thinker,* 17 (7): 6 p.

Hoebeke, L. 2004. Dilemmas and paradoxes in organizing change processes, a critical reflection. In J.J. Boonstra (Ed.), *Dynamics of organizational change and learning:* 149-175. Chichester: Wiley & Sons.

Hoebeke, L. 2007. Verantwoordelijkheid in netwerken: Paradoxaal en toch werkbaar. *M&O: Tijdschrift voor Management & Organisatie*, 58 (4/5): 84-97.

Jansen, W. & Jägers, H.P.M. 2007. De netwerkorganisatie als smokkelaarsnest!? Beelden van schaarste en overvloed bij samenwerking. *M&O: Tijdschrift voor Management & Organisatie,* 61(1): 14-25.

Kahane, A. 2004. *Solving tough problems: An open way of talking, listening, and creating new realities.* San Fransisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Karssiens, A., Van der Linden, C.S. & Wilderom, C.P.M. 2009. Verantwoordelijkheid voelen versus verantwoordelijkheid nemen: De bijdrage van een leiderschapstraject in een penitentiaire inrichting. In R. van Es, J. Boonstra & H. Tours (Eds.), *Cultuurverandering: Mythe en realiteit:* 151-167. Deventer: Kluwer.

Kessels, J. 2006. *Het poëtisch argument: Socratische gesprekken over het goede leven.* Amsterdam: Boom.

Kets de Vries, M. et al. 1993. *Organisaties op de divan: Gedrag en verandering van organisaties in klinisch perspectief,* Schiedam: Scriptum.

Kouwenhoven, M. (Ed.). 1983. *Transaktionele Analyse in Nederland.* Ermelo: Anita.

Maister, D. 2008. *Strategy of a fat smoker.* Boston: The Spangle Press.

Norbu, C. N. 1983. *The mirror: Advice on the Presence of Awareness.* New York: Barrytown Limited.

Revans, R.W. 1998. *The ABC of action learning* (3rd ed). London: Lemos & Crane.

Rogers, C. R. 1980. *A way of being.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Scharmer, C. O. 2007. *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges.* Cambridge, MA: SoL Press.

Senge, P., Scharmer, C. O., Jaworski, J. & Flowers, B. S. 2004. *Presence: Human purpose and the field of the future.* Cambridge, MA: SoL Press.

Simpson, P. F., French, R. & Harvey, C. E. 2002. Leadership and negative capability. *Human Relations,* 55: 1209-1226.

Staveren, A. B. 2007. *Zonder wrijving geen glans. Leren samenwerken bij veranderen en innoveren.* Assen: Van Gorcum.

Varela, F.J. 1999. *Ethical know-how. Action, wisdom, and cognition.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. & Obstfeld, D. 2005. Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16: 409-421.