

# Strategic Leadership and Management of Multistakeholder Organizations

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## Abstract

*Organizational leaders and managers face several challenges, operating in a complex web of institutions including the parent, funding, and host institutions, which all have divergent interests. One area to explore and advocate for in such situations are roles of leadership and management. Based on a constructivist theoretical orientation, we conducted a case study inquiry into the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) and framed our recommendation based on CSRL as a related multistakeholder organization. We first theorized with literature on artistic and scientific leadership and management strategies; and deciphered the four organizational frames including structural, human resources, political, and symbolic, which became our guiding categories in the thematic analysis. The structural frame raised think tanks, reframing, facilities, and technology themes while human resources raised servant leadership, empowerment, professional support, appreciation, welcoming, and farewells. In the political frame, participatory planning, evaluation, fundraising, and transparency emerged while in the symbolic frame, the use of stories, culture, symbols, celebrations, and ceremonies emerged. To achieve managerial and leadership efficiencies, both artistic and scientific management styles across all frames are vital. Understanding employees' working environment and using soft-skill communication are tactics of artistic management. Participation involving experts in setting goals signals scientific style while involving local stakeholders implies artistic and overall collective decision-making. Managers thinking through the structural frame must understand that it is the architectural foundation of their organizations, the helm of power providing vision and direction while in human resources, their goal should be building inter-employee-organizational relationships. Thinking in a political frame, leaders need skills in coalition and negotiation in dealing with conflicts delightfully while in a symbolic frame, leaders ought to maintain the organizational ethos and its public-facing persona through credible communications with the public.*

## Introduction and Background

Organizational leaders, managers, supervisors, and administrators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century face several challenges (Benner & Tushman, 2015), including operating in a complex web of institutions that have established visions, missions, goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve their goals. Leaders and managers must work out their operational strategies commensurate with their funding, parent, and/or host institutions, which all have divergent interests in the same organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Simultaneously, organizations are being challenged to think both at local and global scales (Marquis & Battilana, 2009); strategically function well (Battilana & Lee, 2014); prepare their employees and their organizations to reach to administrative changes (Hussain et al., 2018; Khaw et al., 2023; Peng et al., 2021), some of which can be abrupt like during the COVID-19 pandemic; and also be sustainable (Eccles et al., 2014; Henderson et al., 2015). Sustainance and management of these challenges make organizations keep operating. In the face of such organizational challenges, one of the areas to explore and advocate for are the roles of leadership and management in multistakeholder organizations as well as the leadership frameworks and strategies.

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### Theoretical Framework

This study was founded on Theory X (McGregor, 1960) which is among the prominent theories that describe artistic and scientific management and leadership styles (Bolman & Deal, 2021). In responding to organizational challenges using artistic and scientific strategies, managers and leaders borrow the elements of Theory X strategies. The assumptions in Theory X are that subordinates are passive, lazy, have little ambition, prefer to be led, and resist change. Conventional practices of this view are built on hard and soft versions of Theory X. The hard concept of Theory X is similar to scientific leadership and management, where managerial responses are coercion, tight controls, and punishments to institute performance (Taylor, 1919). This model uses a rational-technical mindset with a manager's, leaders', supervisors', and/or administrators' emphasis on certainty and control (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Merkle, 2023).

Frederick Taylor (1919), the proponent of scientific thinking, held that there is only one best way for employees to perform. Taylor supported his model by saying that *scientific management will mean, for the employers and the workmen who adopt it ... the elimination of almost all causes for disputes and disagreement between them* (p. 142). Taylor designed the scientific model while timing workers during work and rest intervals which in turn determined their remuneration scale. Nadworny (1957) described the scientific method of Taylor as a form of **stopwatch** because the model believes that employees must follow all stringent work rules, codes, and performance appraisal for rewards and promotions (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019). Bolman and Deal (2021) also believe as long as the leaders use specific metrics, they are employing the scientific mode of evaluations to make informed decisions. Other scientific but non-employee manual systems involve using digital monitoring devices like vehicle trackers and security cameras, which map out employee productivity in how time and resources are utilized (Tomczak et al., 2018). Digital-enabled work environments can result in emotional reactions among employees (Beere et al., 2020) especially where they are not properly disclosed. There are multiple critical flaws to Taylorism, for instance, leaders and managers in this lens ignore the political and social dilemmas that employees experience at their workplace which have a significant influence on performance (Symynkywicz, 2023).

The soft side of Theory X (McGregor, 1960) aligns with artistic leadership and management strategies. The artistic strategy involves understanding employees' social and political environment that affects their performance where leaders or managers use soft skills to deal with their employees (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Caulfield et al., 2021). Among the ingredients of artistic leadership and management style involve being passionate about the workers, understanding their working style, and use of communication tactics. The artistic lens is premised on the belief that managers gain some people skills, knowledge, experience, and wisdom over time in their work and life experiences to lead by influence and have workers perform. The generic rules in the employee handbook in scientific models apply after there are continuous failures in improving performance and/or behavioral change among employees (Mintzberg, 1975).

According to Drucker (2020), programs change over time, and the prescribed protocols change which necessitates a change in the employee human resources manuals. Leaders and managers use soft skills like communication and reasoning to avoid conflict and keep everyone happy while influencing performance (Mintzberg, 1975). However, there are high chances of reliance on scientific than artistic management for quality, innovativeness, and commitment in modern organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Nevertheless, Bolman and Deal posit that leaders ought to build and implement human resource strategies by developing a clear philosophy of managing the people. These strategies include hiring the right people for a specific position to have productivity; keeping the employees to reduce turnover through proper rewards and internal promotions; investing in employee professional development to keep up with the latest work ethics; empowering employees through professional support, autonomy, and promoting equality. Success in providing leadership to manage challenges and influence performance is premised on the tactics to integrate artistic and scientific strategies within the organizational frames (Bolman & Deal, 2021).

## Organizational Frames

In organizational management, a frame is *a mental model – a set of ideas and assumptions – that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular territory* (Bolman & Deal, 2021, p. 10). Bolman and Deal identified four organizational frames including structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames. The authors assert that both the *structural* and *human resource* frames influence *managerial efficiencies* while the *political* and *symbolic* frames influence *leadership efficiencies*. They further argue that frames are seen as toolboxes for which picking the right tool can help to mend the organization in the right direction and influence the implementation of activities. When the four frames are aligned and operationalized, they reinforce each other for the effective achievement of organizational goals. When one frame has a defect like the poor design of objectives in the structural frame, it sends shocking vibrations in other frames like failure to properly implement field activities due to poor objective design, prompting swift action from the administration to restructure the design and implementation strategies.

The hierarchy of an organization is the helm of power vested in the *structural frame*. This frame prescribes the goal, vision, mission, objectives, and strategies and is also the *organizational machine* that forms the architectural pillars of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2021). The structural frame stipulates how the goals can be achieved through operationalization program activities, founded on organizational policies, technology, and the working environment. Effective managers and leaders must understand their organizational structure because it is the architectural foundation for pursuing strategic goals. They too must assign roles to line managers based on their specialties, expertise, and abilities to effectively contribute to higher output. In this scenario, when organizations are not performing; reframing and reorganizing their structure is a powerful tool to provide a new direction for implementation (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Holmes & Scull, 2019; Whyte & Davies, 2021). In the structural lens, *scientific management* is viewed when managers and leaders analyze situations logically using facts and data to (re)design better working systems.

The *human resources* frame, also known as the *extended family*, is the heart of the organization dealing with employees, their work, welfare, skills development, and empowerment (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Effective managers and leaders in the human resource frame focus on improving the relationship between the people and the organization and promoting interpersonal and group dynamics among workers. In human resources, it is vital to have *fit* in the organization where the organization and employees are compatible to avoid the exploitation of either party. Earlier research showed that employers exercised a lot of employee exploitation where the latter was duty-bound to work hard following orders and nothing else beyond a paycheck (Follett, 1918; Mayo, 1933). However, Bolman and Deal (2021) provide among the assumptions that *organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse* (p. 121); modern organizations work towards *fit* as vital to achieve success. Managing people requires the use of both artistic and scientific models to instigate positive perceptions about their work. In the *artistic realm*, the use of effective communication helps to tear the blocks within the system, and show empathy, and care to the subordinates. People and organizations are not mutually exclusive; managers need to tailor their emphasis on the welfare of the employees to improve performance but also hold them accountable (*scientific realm*).

The *political frame* also referred to as the *jungle*, is a symbol of leadership effectiveness infused with power, conflicts, coalitions, negotiations, and competition within organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2021). The term *politics* has a negative connotation with metaphors such as *they're playing politics* or *it was all political* (p. 185); however, in organizational leadership, *politics* is linked to the scarcity of resources amidst divergent interests. Effective leaders who think in the political frame are bound to lay strategies on how to deal with conflicts as the best option than the resolutions in themselves. The political frame weaves within the structural and human resources. *Structural theorists* emphasize authority, rational decisions, monitoring, and assessments, whereas *human resource theorists* emphasize empowerment, participation, and collaboration. Similarly, Bolman and Deal mention that *organizational goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among competing stakeholders* (p. 192).

The *symbolic frame*, often referred to as the *theatre*, is also a symbol of leadership effectiveness emphasizing organizational culture, rituals, heroes, heroines, symbols, metaphors, and ceremonies (Bolman & Deal, 2021). The symbolic frame forms the *public-facing persona*, framing the public relations schema of the organization. Organizations often weave the symbolic and the human resources together through employee interactions with the public. Celebrating and recognizing the achievements of employees sends good signals to colleagues, stimulating performance and improving the public recognition of the organization for its unwavering support. The meaning of the organizational symbols, events, and actions to the people is intangible, but they shape the public's thoughts, emotions, and actions about the organization.

### **The Case Study: Iowa State University and the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Uganda**

In this qualitative inquiry, we describe the leadership and management dispensation of the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL), an international non-profit organization based in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Iowa State University (ISU), operating in rural Uganda to end hunger, build human capacity, and assets to improve livelihoods (Butler & McMillan, 2015; Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2024; 2025; Martin, 2018; Sseguya et al., 2009; 2015; 2018; Thurow, 2024). Born in 2003 out of a sustainable livelihood program, CSRL operates in a trio partnership with Makerere University, Kampala (MAK), and local not-for-profit non-governmental organizations. The CSRL was operationalized in Uganda in 2004 and in its first phase, its partners were MAK and Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), and 2014 to date, ISU Uganda Program (ISU-UP) is the participating partner along with MAK (Butler & Acker, 2015). The CSRL uses gifts from private benefactors to achieve its goals (Butler & McMillan, 2015; Thurow, 2024). Running a multistakeholder organization of this nature requires effective leaders and managers who are knowledgeable about and able to effectively apply leadership and management strategies, theories, and frameworks in their routine operations, which guaranteed our investigation to uncover these aspects and make recommendations to related organizations.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

This inquiry was conducted to explore how the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) has practiced its leadership and managerial roles. Guided by the reviewed literature, investigators sought to understand how managerial and leadership efficiencies were achieved in an interplay of applying artistic and scientific strategies integrated within the four organizational frames. Our inquiry is situated within the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE, 2023) value on advancing public knowledge of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNS) systems, specifically *examining leadership and organizational development in AFNR systems* (p. 8). It also aligns with the AAAE value of *examining social dynamics in human and life sciences*, focusing on *developing outreach and leadership initiatives which enhance the well-being of communities* (p. 11). The ultimate goal of the inquiry was to establish the techniques and provide advocacy for improving the leadership and managerial effectiveness of related multistakeholder organizations working towards improving livelihoods, guided by two research questions:

1. In what ways has the CSRL organization practiced and manifested its managerial roles?
2. In what ways has the CSRL organization practiced and manifested its leadership roles?

### **Methods**

This qualitative inquiry was founded on constructivism, a theoretical orientation that focuses *exclusively on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind* (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). We employed a case study design and conducted a content analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of the annual reports of CSRL. The reports in this inquiry are referred to as the cases and the units of analysis. Data were contained in these reports. We collected and analyzed data on an individual report basis. There were a total of 17 reports available in digital form between 2008 and 2024. We purposively selected, downloaded, and analyzed 11 reports from 2014–2024 (Table 1) to focus our inquiry exclusively on the CSRL/ISU-UP partnership.

**Table 1**

CSRL/ISU-UP Annual Donor Impact Report for the Case Study Period, 2014–2024.

No.	Year	Theme of the Year	Number of Pages
1	2024	Innovation and Sustainability	20
2	2023	Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency	20
3	2022	Foundation for Independence	20
4	2021	Spirit of Innovation	20
5	2020	Sustaining Resiliency	20
6	2019	Improving Lives, Sustaining Lives	20
7	2018	Sustaining Connections That Matter	20
8	2017	Sustaining Growth Over Time	20
9	2016	Mwebale Inho, Thank You Very Much	20
10	2015	Your Passion, Their Transformation	20
11	2014	Improved Nutrition, Stable Incomes, and Hope for the Future	24

Source: Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL, 2025).

### Data Analysis and Presentation

We intended to generate rich detailed descriptions of our account from cases' representations of leadership and management dispensation to answer our two research questions. In this process, we began with naive reading to understand the information contained in the reports. We further employed an in-depth document reading and analysis. We engaged in a dialogue with our data by asking interesting and useful questions as recommended by Shank (2006) on how organizational frames [i.e., structural, human resources, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2021)] were represented or manifested. In the process, we sought to recognize and classify commonalities across the cases as well as perspectives that appeared distinct among them. In addition, we wrote analytic memos to reflect on emerging unique ideas that formed our themes (Keane, 2022). We also reviewed the artifacts and pictures (Leavy, 2020) captioned in each case, took notes and memos on each intuitive caption that we used to generate new themes as a form of triangulation, and also helped us in subsequent discussions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saldana, 2016). We based our analysis on the four organizational frames as our guiding categories.

Our analysis focused on each particular frame, including how the frame was represented, the pattern in which it was represented, and the interconnectedness with other frames. The leadership and managerial elements that depicted artistic or scientific approaches in the frames were all noted in our analytic memos that guided our discussions (Keane, 2022). Themes emerged inductively in this thematic analysis process as we closely read and interpreted the writings for each case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saldana, 2016). We used a constant comparison amongst themes and aligned them into categories based on the four organizational frames to describe predominant themes related to negotiating distinctiveness and look-alike extracts within and amongst the cases. This process allowed us to report an account individually and/or on case-based themes. In this study, we defined a category as the main descriptor representing the four frames and themes as those descriptors that emerged to support each frame.

The investigators participated in four invited guest speeches on leadership in the Spring of 2021 at Iowa State University and also conducted four informational interviews with four leaders throughout their inquiry *about what* not *about whom*, relating to institutional leadership, and these interviews are not considered human subject research by Institutional Review Board (Bristol et al., 2014). Important messages relating to program leadership were extracted from their personal communications. The invited guests included two University Presidents and a Vice President of Extension and Outreach, and a 4-H State Director, and those interviewed included an Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs), and a Director of The Women's and Gender Studies Program, all in the United States. Also, we

had informational interviews with a Department Chair of Animal and Range Sciences and an Interim Chair of The Uganda Agribusiness Professionals Association, all in Uganda.

All key messages from the guest lectures and informational interviewees were used in explanations but not for developing new themes. Our findings are presented based on the four frames and their themes, concurrently with the discussions. We shared our insights into the findings, making connections between frames and themes within and amongst the cases and with artistic and/or scientific elements in each frame and/or theme. We further theorized with literature across different schools of thought on organizational leadership and management in similar multistakeholder organizations. The findings were presented in the form of rich thick descriptions and the cases' accounts through excerpts.

### **Establishing Goodness and Trustworthiness**

These concepts specifically focus on an account of the data but not the data itself or its methods. We exercised caution on reporting correctly, making sure to be consistent with obtained data, and the purpose of the study. Most importantly reporting in thick descriptions to account for the cases' representation of each organizational frame and use of excerpts from the cases. We reflected on our positionality and reflexivity as well as our paper trail generated throughout this investigation to control for personal bias that could impact the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Much support was sought from two of our colleagues familiar with qualitative inquiries and the then Director of the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) through debriefing by sharing our themes and getting their feedback which we embedded into our discussions. We attended guest speeches from four leaders and interviewed four additional leaders for informational purposes only and all their insights were incorporated into our discussions to provide a lively context beyond the CSRL perspectives to include higher education institution, their programs, and national associations, all with similar aspirations of have an effective fabric of leadership, management, supervision, and administration for a positive outcome to their communities.

### **Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity**

Discussing the positionality in qualitative research is important to weave the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It describes how the distance is minimized as we are required to get immersed in the field. The principal investigator (P.I.) in this inquiry is a native of Kamuli, Uganda where the CSRL/ISU-UP implements livelihood interventions. The P.I. was involved in CSRL/ISU-UP's routine monitoring and evaluation between 2017–2022 while pursuing his graduate studies under the supervision of the Co-P.I. (2019–2022) and CSRL directors. The P.I.'s positionality eased data collection, analysis, and interpretation. He is continuously engaged with the program, reading its annual reports as they are published to enhance his graduate research; and working with the program's impact evaluations on global service-learning (doctoral research) and food and nutrition security (master's research) which they have been extensively published in journals. During this inquiry, we maintained a continuous reflexive awareness of the whole process in such a setting as the P.I. was involved in the program directly to help keep up the research agenda and reduce the biasing of the results (Savvides et al., 2014).

## **Results and Discussions**

The findings are presented in categories describing the four organizational frames concurrently with the discussions drawing insights from the data, literature, and personal communications of various successful leaders. The organizational frames are aligned to research questions where frames including structural and human resources depict managerial efficiency; and political and symbolic depict leadership efficiency (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Each frame has different themes but most importantly they work congruently for a common goal of organizational development and sustainability. Similarly, each frame sees a leader and/or a manager and leadership and management in a different perspective and the leader and/or the manager borrows elements from each frame to be effective in organizational operations.

**RQ1: In what ways has CSRL practiced and manifested its managerial roles?**

Four themes emerged from the structural frame and five from the human resource frame (Table 2) which collectively define organizational managerial efficiency and effectiveness.

**Table 2***Structural and Human Resources Organizational Frames for Managerial Efficiency and Effectiveness*

Structural Frame Themes	Human Resources Frame Themes
1. Think tanks	1. Servant leadership
2. Reframing	2. Empowerment
3. Facilities	3. Professional support
4. Technology	4. Appreciation, honors, and rewards
	5. Welcoming and farewells

**The Structural Frame Themes**

The structural frame is the engine of organizational design and functionality among designed departments. It is the helm of organizational planning and must be set up properly to rise to other frames working congruently. In this frame, four themes emerged including think tanks, reframing, technology, and facilities. The Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) adopted **think tanks** in its structural setting since its inception in the early 2000s as a livelihood program to involve stakeholders in planning (Butler & Mazur, 2015). In the **2019 think tank**, stakeholders gathered in Kamuli district, Uganda, and challenged themselves to plan for the next five years of the 2020–2024 strategic planning phase. This planning exercise followed the end of the 2014–2019 first CSRL/ISU-UP phase as depicted in the extract ... *and a Kamuli-based think tank to challenge CSRL and ISU-UP with innovative ideas ... culminated with a workshop ... attended by 25... program leaders along with local community leaders* (CSRL, 2020, p. 2). Think tanks have been used globally to brainstorm ideas that inform policy and guide the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of organizational programs (Larrea & Karlsen, 2022; McGann, 2018; 2021; Salas Porras & Giordano, 2022).

In organizations, management is linked to the implementation of ideas vested in the vision and mission statements. In her communication, Ann Oberhauser [now retired], Professor Emerita of Sociology and Director of Women's and Gender Studies Program at Iowa State said, managers and leaders ought not to make decisions unilaterally, they must delegate and involve people in decision-making (A. Oberhauser, personal communication, March 23, 2021). During the CSRL strategic planning, the involvement of expert delegates in think tanks symbolized a scientific management style and the local community members symbolized artistic style and overall collaborative planning which are both instrumental in the effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the program activities in the communities to assess impact and devise improvement strategies (Sseguya & McMillan, 2015).

In the **reframing** theme, in 2014, CSRL severed its partnership with Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO) and registered its Iowa State University Uganda Program (ISU-UP) partner, ... *the registration of the ISU-UP as a nongovernmental organization... our NGO status provides the flexibility to operate independently, develop new partnerships and attract international funding* (CSRL, 2014, p. 1). Similarly, there were changes in operational models from *farmer-to-farmer* extension approach of 2004–2014 (Masinde, Butler et al., 2015; Seguya et al., 2015) to a *comprehensive lifespan approach to capacity building*, touching lives of all people from pregnancy to seniors while building their capacities in various livelihood education programs (CSRL, 2017 as discussed in Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023a, pp. 237–239). Further, during the strategic planning of the 2020–2024 cycle, stakeholders restated the vision and mission statements of the CSRL/ISU-UP partnership, a key feature of redefining and redirecting the operational mandates with the new partner organization.

The old CSRL/VEDCO vision reads: *Thriving rural communities that benefit from food and financial security ... environmental stewardship, and overall sustainable livelihoods*. The restated CSRL/ISU-UP vision reads: *To develop responsible global citizens and thriving local communities that benefit from food and financial security, quality education and healthcare, civic participation, social inclusion, environmental stewardship, and overall sustainable livelihoods* (CSRL, 2020, p. 2). Similarly, the old CSRL/VEDCO mission reads: *To support resilient, sustainable rural livelihoods through the discovery and application of science-based and indigenous knowledge*. The restated CSRL/ISU-UP mission reads: *CSRL and ISU-UP use the power of education to develop sustainable communities and responsible global citizens* (CSRL, 2020, p. 2). Reframing and restructuring are important strategies in organizations that involve thinking from multiple angles to develop alternative diagnostic approaches vital for organizational development, which leads to improvements in the performance of tasks to achieve the organizational overarching goals (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Holmes & Scull, 2019; Whyte & Davies, 2021).

**Reframing** strategies are determined by the goodness of management and leadership. Several institutional leaders have been successful in their reframing endeavors. In Uganda, for instance, Venansius Baryamureeba, (former) Vice Chancellor of Makerere University reframed the university from a faculty system to a collegiate system to improve efficiency and management due to increased student enrollment and competition from private universities (Bisaso, 2017; Lutaaya et al., 2024; Ssempebwa et al., 2019). Additional developments have happened, with the reframing of departments such as the Department of Agricultural Production renamed the Department of Animal and Range Sciences as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. In our conversation with the new Department Chair, Kugonza said that *the idea grew from the need to grow the Mandate of the departmental subunits*. He added that *we have a new Mandate of Range Sciences. This change will enable us to research the sustainable use and management of rangelands which make up a big fraction of Uganda* (D. Kugonza, personal communication, January 18, 2025). Still, within Makerere, our conversation with the Interim National Chair of Uganda Agribusiness Professionals Association (UAPA), Tumwa, indicated that he reframed a 2008 agribusiness alumni group into UAPA and reiterated that, *for now, we have an association that will bring all of us together as agribusiness professionals*. He added that *with this in mind, we foresee career development support for each other, developing our enterprises, and lobbying for any common causes* (S. Tumwa, personal communication, March 26, 2025).

In the United States, several successful **refarming** endeavors have been successful in improving program performance and congruency across units. For instance, at Iowa State University, the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies (AGEDS) was formed in 1989 but has had a long history of reframing since its inception in 1911 (AGEDS, 2025). From the United States Sunbelt region, the President of Arizona State University successfully reframed the university from a public agency, relying on state dollar appropriations to a public enterprise, doing business with partners and involving them in decision-making (M. Crow, personal communication, April 2, 2021). Michael Crow has been passionate about reshaping the American university system with a focus on research and the university system's public-facing and social responsibility. This intent is described as: *across interrelated and mutually interdependent dimensions' intended to institutionalize and operationalize a new model for the American research university* (Crow & Dabars, 2020, p. 101). Similarly, in automobiles, reframing turned Allan Mulally, the CEO of Ford into a visionary and innovative personnel sailing through the business waves, making Ford not only a car company but a mobility too (Borins & Herst, 2018). At global and regional levels, we have seen reframing go through several humanitarian organizations such as The League of Nations of 1919 to the United Nations of 1945 to date (Kuorelahti et al., 2025); The Organization of African Union of 1963 reframed into African Union in 2000 (Engel, 2023), all to improve nations' representation and performance of these organizations.

In the **technology** theme, the construction of Mpirigiti Rural Training Center conformed to the global green principles to reduce carbon footprints (Allen, 2012; Allen & Clouth, 2012; Andrews & Friis, 2012; United Nations, 2019). Local materials used in construction were locally sourced, *all 30,000 sun-dried building blocks were made ... using soil on the property saving approximately 42 tons of firewood* (CSRL, 2017b, p. 14). Upon completion of the Mpirigiti facility, currently, *wastewater is recycled using an*

*anaerobic biodigester and constructed wetlands. The facility also has solar water heaters [that] provide hot water and photovoltaic panels [that] generate power. Also, natural ventilation ... shade trees help keep the rooms cool* (CSRL, 2018, p. 4). Activities of the CSRL involve using technology and it adapted to the current technological innovations with its global university partnerships (Iowa State University, 2022).

In the **facilities** theme, Mpirigiti Rural Training Center houses the organization's offices and residential facilities that have eased program coordination of activities. In 2017, towards the completion of the facility, a student intern stated that *the new training center will provide a collaborative environment, for not only ... University students to live and work together, but also a space for community members to learn from and teach one another* (CSRL, 2017, p. 16). In 2018, the facility was commissioned, *Mpirigiti Rural Training Centre Opens its Doors: The new training center means ... space to serve an even greater number of students* (CSRL, 2018, p. 2). The training center also has demonstration sites and, a program coordinator reported, that *the introduction of the livestock demonstration farm is a great opportunity for farmers ... where they acquire knowledge in livestock management* (CSRL, 2019, p. 4; Ikendi et al., 2025). Moreover, the Mpirigiti Center has been instrumental in supporting youth skilling through hosting Youth Institutes ... *a one-day session in June, when 57 students from 15 schools gathered at Mpirigiti ... for the final event ... There were 23 teacher mentors who helped with training at the schools and on the day of presentations. The Youth Institute aims to develop social and emotional skills by providing youth with opportunities to interact on world issues and learn more about ISUUP* (CSRL, 2023, p. 6). Mpirigiti has supported other programs including agronomy and postharvest (Ikendi et al., 2024), nutrition (Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023b), and service-learning (Ikendi, Retallick, 2023) with its experiential and experimental demonstration sites.

Similarly, in communities, CSRL set up malnutrition rehabilitation centers, each with a training house/gazebo, latrine, bathroom, and kitchen to facilitate community education on nutrition, water, and health (Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023b; Ikendi, Owusu & Masinde, 2023), agronomy and postharvest (Ikendi et al., 2024), livestock (Ikendi et al., 2025), and other related programs. In schools, program donors have also supported the construction of teachers' houses, kitchens, and girls' dormitories (CSRL, 2015, p. 6). One astonishing development moving forward was designating **improving facilities** as the sixth goal in the 2020–2024 strategic plan during the 2019 think tank (CSRL, 2019). The construction of school kitchens has been strategic helping to manage nutrition programs in schools by providing a healthy cooking space (Byaruhanga, 2016; Nonnecke et al., 2018; 2016). Program directors noted that *providing nutritious meals to Ugandan schoolchildren launched as a pilot project in 2010 and has grown to serve five primary schools five days a week ... Donor support funded new kitchens and school buildings* (CSRL, 2022, p. 5; CSRL, 2021, p. 4). New structures provide learning spaces with less perception of threats, detrimental to learning.

### The Human Resources Frame Themes

In human resources, five themes emerged including servant leadership, empowerment, professional support, appreciation, and welcoming and farewells. **Servant leadership** was demonstrated by the directors in an altruistic calling, with the power of wisdom to deliver their communities from trauma. The Director said during the COVID-19 pandemic that *we would prefer to be focusing all of our energies on development. He added that the current circumstances require us to pivot toward including some relief services ... flexibility of CSRL donor support, ISU-UP relief efforts began almost immediately with the delivery of maize flour, rice, soap to ... frontline health workers* (CSRL, 2020, p. 4). Related to weather catastrophe, Director reported that *... widespread flooding displaced over 2,500 families in Buyende ... the Kingdom of Busoga contacted ISU-UP. He added that even though this was outside of the geographic boundaries ... staff knew they needed to respond and respond quickly. They didn't wait around for permission to act* (2020, p. 6).

The greatness of a leader is their affection to share power and authority with their subordinates (Kanter, 1977; Northouse, 2025). This level of leadership practice defines a **servant** and people power leader whose fabric is in the art of dispensing that *natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first* (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 15). The CSRL/ISU-UP also initiated a Youth Leadership Camp which involves an

*intensive session focused on developing critical leadership skills and promoting youth as leaders* (CSRL, 2015, p. 15). Such camps are useful in developing leaders who feel engaged as they dispense their roles. In the United States, a study conducted with undergraduate club leaders and one leader said *I'm a very hands-on leader. I really like to check up on people, make sure that they are able to get everything done, see if they need any help and am really always involved in the process* (Bush et al., 2023, p. 136). In another study, one student leader stressed the importance of engaging subordinates and said *you got to have something that draws in people and keeps them interested, because when you have meetings that ... don't have any meaning to them, then there's no reason to go* (Cletzer et al., 2023, p. 127). A leader or manager under the human resources frame is seen as a **catalyst** and a **servant**, providing the leadership process in a supportive and empowering manner. The performance, satisfaction, and retention of employees are highly dependent on the management of the people. Organizations require a **transformative leader**, a leader who can **engage** and encourage subordinates to serve the organizational mission above self-interest (Northouse, 2025).

**Servant leaders** help their subordinates to grow, empower them to build independence, trust, creativity, and innovativeness, and build community (Northouse, 2025; Russell et al., 2017). This leadership in turn helps workers get satisfied and move smoothly along the ladder of needs described by Maslow (1943). The CSRL program leadership defines a **transformative** and **empowering** leader whose response broke down the bureaucracy that would be exercised to get approval from the top levels of administration to act in such emergencies during COVID-19 and flooding. Among the motivations at work are autonomy and purpose describing the desire to control over work and wanting to be part of something bigger (Pink, 2009). Further, leadership also displayed a collaborative call from the cultural leaders of the Busoga Kingdom – a highly venerated traditional leadership structure (Kasule, 2022; Lubwama, 2012; Quinn, 2014) and the delivery of relief services through the local government illustrating a private-public partnership in the development of communities (Butler & McMillan, 2015; Ikendi & Retallick, 2023).

Generally, the message in the abstracts of all annual reports demonstrates a conviction in **people-centered leadership**, connecting the benefactors, staff, partners, and beneficiaries with the messages of hope for a better livelihood in Kamuli district. As retaliated in **tapping philanthropy** (Butler & McMillan, 2015), CALS Endowed Dean said, *CSRL's goal is to redefine the word 'philanthropy' by taking it back to its more classical meaning — love for humanity, benevolence toward the whole human family, universal goodwill, and the desire and readiness to do good to everyone* (CSRL, 2015, p. 1). In 2024, Iowa State University President added that *twenty years of [CSRL] represents a generation of impact ... made possible through CSRL. It's a 20-year track record of philanthropy and partnership with faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and supporters* (CSRL, 2024, p. 1). CALS Dean Endowed added *we like to think of this 20-year anniversary as not just a celebration of what we've done, but a **recommitment** to what we're going to do. That's what we need to be planning for, and excited about because the work has just begun* (p. 18).

Relatedly, CSRL **empowers** its staff, and they have developed into influential people in their communities. For instance, *while graduates of the nutrition program go on to care for their own families, other graduates assume leadership roles in the NECs [Nutrition Education Centers], becoming trainers or mentors for new enrollees* (CSRL, 2014, p. 7). NECs are rehabilitation homes for at-risk-for-malnutrition pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children of 0-59 months of age where they are rehabilitated with nutrition therapy of porridge and several livelihood programs (Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023b; Masinde, McMillan et al., 2015). Also, *In 2010, [Dan] joined the ISU-UP as a research assistant working on grain amaranth. Today, he is the service learning and school garden projects officer, and a leader in establishing school gardens as outdoor learning laboratories* (CSRL, 2018, p. 8). In organizational management, it is important to give workers autonomy in making decisions about their fieldwork.

The key aspects of motivations at work are autonomy and purpose describing the desire to control over work (Autin et al., 2022; Bolman & Deal, 2021; Slemph et al., 2021) and wanting to be part of something bigger which the CSRL leadership demonstrated for its workers. Fieldwork requires staff to get immersed in the community, to understand what they ought to do, making them develop wisdom in planning

and implementing programs. Empowerment once offered to the employee influences their work and also results in greater benefits in society to develop better leaders. The [then] Iowa State 4-H Director, in a guest lecture, said, that professional development and empowerment are priority areas in organizations, and these have reformed the 4-H program in promotion of youth education (D. Nistler, personal communication, March 26, 2021). An independent and empowered staff results in the gain of trust in their leaders, reducing the cost of supervision and improving loyalty at work (Alnoor et al., 2022; Ton, 2014). The competitive advantage arise from a workforce that is skilled and motivated which grows with professional development.

Providing **professional support** from several advisors at ISU, MAK, CSRL, and partners made it possible for service-learning alumni to invent a pedal-operated grain cleaner that has been adopted in communities to reduce grain losses (Mayanja et al., 2018). The scenario was *Issa was a service learner; cleaned maize by winnowing and using a grain sieve. Finding the process tedious ... with support from ISU-UP, he created his first pedal-operated maize cleaner* (CSRL, 2020, p. 14). Service-learning alumni have been supported by creating research innovations that support livelihoods. In 2021, for instance, four alumni were conducting studies in Kamuli, Uganda on meat safety (Nabwiire et al., 2023), soil amendments (Akitwine, 2021), improving pumpkin production and marketing (Kwikiiriza, 2022), and cocoa production prospects (Wokibula et al., 2025). These alumni are supported through the Borel Global Fellows Program and Michael Couch Soil Science International Graduate Student Scholarship for agronomy and soil studies, and Dana and Martha Robes for food safety research (CSRL, 2021, pp. 4–5). A benefactor noted that *[Mary] and I are pleased to help develop young people with a passion to make a difference ... gain new skills, and provide the leadership needed for the future food security of Africa* (CSRL, 2024, p. 3).

Through CSRL, this support is the kind of leadership expected of the organizational administration to practice in developing the future generation of responsible development experts through high-impact programs like the global service-learning program (Ikendi, Retallick et al., 2023; Nonnecke et al., 2015). CSRL operates within the United States land-grant philosophy of teaching, research, extension, and service (ISU, 2022; Ikendi & Retallick, 2023), and it relies on indigenous knowledge (Masinde & McMillan, 2015) and research findings (Acker et al., 2015) to guide diffusion and influence adoption of innovations. Research conducted in human resources shows that often employers fail to invest their precious resources and time in developing talented cadres (Bolman & Deal, 2021); yet a program's competitive advantage is gained from having a workforce that is skilled and motivated (Guo & Chen, 2022).

Research support is a plausible venture toward the overall goal of CSRL while applying innovations that have been tested and approved locally through participatory action and applied research. The findings of several students' research supported by the program financially and/or supervision by the directors have guided the design of extension education materials and the diffusion of different innovations. In addition to earlier mentioned research on meat safety, soils, pumpkins, and cocoa, other research projects include grain amaranths (Muyonga et al., 2011); storage pest management (Ahimbisibwe et al., 2024; Asimo et al., 2024; Bbosa et al., 2017; 2020; Brumm et al., 2021; Sserunjoji et al., 2021; 2024; Tumutegyereize et al., 2022); tomato production (Tusiime et al., 2019); soil management (Wokibula & Westgate, 2016); livestock (Ikendi et al., 2025; Kayondo et al., 2023; 2024; 2025; Kugonza et al., 2014; Lubandi et al., 2019; Walugembe, 2014); public health (Buyinza et al., 2024; Ikendi, Owusu & Masinde, 2023); school feeding (Byaruhanga, 2016; Nonnecke et al., 2016; Ssabika et al., 2024). Such research support reinforces the land-grant ethos of teaching, research, extension, and service abroad (Ikendi & Retallick, 2023; Iowa State University, 2022).

In **appreciation, honors, and rewards**, the CALS Dean honored the incoming and outgoing CSRL Directors for their resilience and dedicated service to the program and communities. The report reads, *this past fall I had the pleasure of honoring [Don], with my Dean's Citation for Extraordinary Contributions to CALS, and for [Dina], the college's Lifetime Achievement Award* (CSRL, 2019, p. ii). To the staff, the Dean further mentioned that *We are very proud of our ISU-Uganda Program in-country staff. They are a great example of an effective land grant university effort, supported by trusted relationships ... working with and alongside local partners* (CSRL, 2020, p. 4). Schwartz and Porath (2014) wrote an opinion describing why

white-collar employees feel less satisfied and linked it to a lack of appreciation from their leaders and managers. Appreciated employees tend to have self-esteem, innovative ideas, good work ethics, and good communication which improves performance (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018). It is courteous of the managers and leaders at all levels of the organization to appreciate the work done by the subordinates. This kind of appreciation shows that they do care and are mindful of the fruits and value of employees' labor (Krishnaveni & Monica, 2018; Tetrick & Haimann, 2014). Irrespective of the type, whether monetary, non-monetary, formal, or informal, whatever form of recognition, has a connotation of employee satisfaction which increases their engagement and motivation for work (Kwarteng et al., 2024).

In the **welcome** theme, CSRL welcomes [Don] and, as of January 2020, CSRL director, [Ken] took over as associate director for livestock development, [Leo] has joined as the associate director of agronomy (CSRL, 2020, p. 16). Welcoming employees is an important aspect of management in the recognition of incoming staff. Welcoming new staff in a public realm like annual reports is a way of expressing love and indoctrinating such staff into the program. It is also a way of expressing what their vision is ahead of their job challenge in this onboarding process (Frögéli et al., 2023; Godinho et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2022).

In **farewell** and **appreciation**, CSRL thanks, [Dina] as CSRL director, [Dina] was involved with impacting the lives of more than 60,000 people. Her legacy with CSRL will be a highly functioning organization. [Ron] launched and then led a truly outstanding livestock program in Uganda, directly impacted more than 5,000 farmers ... through training, livestock distribution, and improved food security (CSRL, 2020, p. 17). Recognizing the outgoing staff and spelling out their affectionate achievements during their tenure sends positive signals to the old, current, and aspiring staff of the kind of servant leaders in CSRL. Organizational retirees are ambassadors, a source of wisdom, and their stories as spelled out in their achievements are inspirational for the incoming and current staff to work hard and build on their success. In our guest lecture, the Vice President for ISU Extension [retired], advised that, be a servant leader, help, carry resources, coach, be available, and celebrate the success of others, such qualities help lead to successful extension education programs (J. Lawrence, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

### **RQ2: In what ways has CSRL practiced and manifested its leadership roles?**

Three themes emerged in the political frame and four in the symbolic frame (Table 3.), all collectively depicting **leadership effectiveness** and efficiencies.

**Table 3**

Political and Symbolic Organizational Frames for Leadership Effectiveness

Themes From Political Frame	Themes From Symbolic Frame
1. Participatory planning and evaluation	1. Stories
2. Fundraising	2. Culture
3. Accountability and transparency	3. Symbols
	4. Ceremonies and celebrations

### **The Political Frame Themes**

In the political frame, three themes emerged including participatory planning and evaluation, fundraising, and transparency. In **participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation**, it is mythical to think that leaders and/or managers have set goals at the helm of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Goals are set by challenging each other as staff and stakeholders based on the past, and present, and projecting the future. In 2019, during CSRL planning, coalitions were depicted in the think tank and setting program goals; *Two years ago, CSRL began a comprehensive evaluation process including an external team of experts, community stakeholders, review of all monitoring and evaluation data. The director adds ... a Kamuli-based think tank to challenge CSRL and ISU-UP with innovative ideas ... culminated with a workshop in Kamuli attended by 25 ... program leaders along with local community leaders ... intensive planning ... selecting the six most important goals for the next five years* (CSRL, 2020, p. 2).

In the United States, one co-author has been involved in two strategic planning exercises. One as a graduate student, he participated as a *Strategic Plan Reviewer* for Iowa State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences strategic planning exercise for 2023–2027 in March 2022, presided over by the CALS Endowed Dean. A second planning exercise was as an employee of the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). He participated in a 4-day planning exercise phase one for the UC NAR Vision 2024 (UC ANR, 2023a). A blueprint spells out how key areas were arrived at ... *this 2040 Strategic Vision document as a blueprint to guide our work, structure, and resource allocation over the next 15 years. Informed by feedback and insights from hundreds of UC ANR personnel, external partners ...* (UC ANR, 2023b, p. 2). Institutional success in strategic planning rests in the power of coalition and building community through participatory exercise among stakeholders for a common goal.

Coalition success is a factor of leadership competence (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Greene et al., 2021). Leadership provides a vision for the organization and requires cooperation with stakeholders. In our interviews, the Associate Dean and Director of CALS Global, in his success leading global programs at Virginia Tech said, you do not lead by commanding but by influence, people have to believe in you and your ideas (T. Thompson, personal communication, March 23, 2021). Involving stakeholders in setting and prioritizing program goals has good implications for the implementation, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of programs (Sseguya & McMillan, 2015). Effective leaders through the lens of the political frame are seen as advocates and negotiators, their leadership process is through advocacy and coalition building (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Organizations are considered roiling arenas that require building coalitions between members of different interest groups for a common goal of sharing scarce resources.

In **fundraising**, CSRL leadership understands its benefactors and stakeholders and has built a cordial relationship to a level of self-initiated moves to raise funds. For instance, *more than \$52,000 was raised through crowdfunding. Many of the donors were service-learning alumni, a convincing testament to the program's life-long impact* (CSRL, 2016, p. 15). Similarly, *[Lia] decided to run a marathon to raise funds for the schools ... collected sponsorships to run the IMT Des Moines ... raised more than \$10,000* (CSRL, 2020, p. 1). Lia's passion arose out of participating in service-learning and developing the passion to do something from her talent to help communities. Students who participate in programs like global service-learning are likely to participate in charitable work (Ikendi, Retallick et al., 2023; Paige et al., 2009).

Talking about nutrition health through the NECs (Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023b; Masinde, McMillan et al., 2015), program leaders while at ISU encouraged [Tan], a donor, to visit the CSRL programs in Uganda. Tan visited in summer 2022 and he said *my traveling companion [Sara] had been a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nurse, so arrangements were made for us to visit the Kamuli General Hospital's NICU*. Tan added that Sara was concerned that the mothers weren't getting the nutrition they needed to provide sustenance for their babies (CSRL, 2023, p. 1), an observation supported by Ikendi, Owusu et al. (2023c). Tan, therefore, *committed to funding a NEC at the hospital, plus at least two more ...* This act reinforces the **benevolence of humanity** and fulfills their aspirations. Tan was quoted, *Sara is certain the NEC at the Kamuli Hospital NICU will save lives by reducing infant deaths. That gives me a good feeling because helping others is the way I was raised* (CSRL, 2023, p. 1). Effective resource sourcing for nonprofit organizations through fundraising is linked to leadership efficiency, especially in the philanthropic stream (Scaife et al., 2013). In the United States, lack of leadership and poor resourcing diversity were identified as among the factors threatening the ability of directors to raise the needed funds (Jeanne & Marla, 2013).

**Accountability** and **transparency** themes are elements of good leadership in an organization in the use of funds. Operating in a multistakeholder environment, involving domestic and global beneficiaries and benefactors, it becomes healthy for organizations to show where the money comes from and how it is used. The CSRL Directors reported that *our program relies on the generosity of donors, we owe them complete transparency in how we use their gifts. \$1.6 million invested: How our work is funded: 69% Donor funding ... Where your giving goes: 31% Community/school nutrition, 24% Education ...* (CSRL, 2020, p. 17). CSRL adopted a voluntary disclosure of its financials, a key to achieving sustainability, good

governance, and accountability, and a gesture of social credibility (Asiimwe et al., 2019; del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Sanzo-Pérez et al., 2017). Resource allocation among all the units illustrates the hard-to-reach decisions during budgeting and rationing of funds among all units with divergent interests. Efficient leaders fight to support all organizational units with available resources.

### The Symbolic Frame Themes

Four themes emerged including stories, culture, symbols, and ceremonies and celebrations. One strategy the CSRL program uses to achieve its goal is adult skilling for self-reliance in income innovations (Ikendi, Owusu et al., 2023a; 2023b; Martin, 2018). CSRL uses a theory of change as emulated in the **story** of [Renah] depicting the constricted values of the partners. *I was in a really poor state. My son got sick. He had to be admitted to the Mulago Hospital to receive blood and his nutrition was not good. But ever since I joined the ISU-UP soapmaking project ... I now have a cow, pigs, and goats. I have also built a good house ... I would like to start my own soapmaking business and expand my income* (CSRL, 2023, p. 9).

**Stories** communicate the organizational ethos which is powerful in sharing historical knowledge, values, and identity, sparking actions, and envisioning the future (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Brummans et al., 2019; Gottschall, 2012). **Stories** also convey vivid information convincingly, holding a powerful grip of imagination which is powerful in changing behavior and instigating new perceptions. Such an astonishing transformation of Renah from malnutrition, building assets and livestock, and provisions from the program are all about the theory of change which upholds that CSRL and ISU goal abroad embedded within the land-grant mission (Ikendi & Retallick, 2023; ISU, 2022). Such stories are memorable and communicate one's life accounts and reinforce that program's ethos. Overall, in the symbolic frame, a leader is seen as a prophet and poet, practicing leadership in the form of inspiration and meaning-making central to shaping the performance spirit and persona of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2021). Leaders play the leadership role in the organization as a **theatre** where the public is watching actions as they derive intrinsic meaning.

The organizational **culture** *is shared values and norms contained in an organization and teaches workers who come* (Muafi & Azim, 2019, p. 145). CSRL shaped its **culture** in the community by seeing a problem, acting in collaboration, and monitoring performance. For instance, *meeting needs and maximizing resources are in the DNA of CSRL, and its goals and strategies are constantly **measured against that mark*** (CSRL, 2020, p. 2). In acting on the problem, *the Uganda lockdown ... forced an abrupt change to the way education was delivered ... ISU-UP field specialists ... quickly created plans to keep students engaged ... Guided by the Kamuli District Education Office [they]... worked with parents ... worked with Headteachers of each school to enlist teachers who could help in evaluating the students' work* (CSRL, 2020, p. 10). The organizational **culture** illustrates how things are done, arising out of continued interaction with the community and understanding each other which improves job satisfaction and performance. Key indicators of culture are the result, people, team-oriented, innovativeness, attention to detail, aggression, and maintenance of the status quo (Dóra et al., 2019; Robbins & Judge, 2009). Acting to the problem and evaluating actions on a yardstick with staff and partners defines flexibility in leadership and demonstrates an element of **scientific leadership**. Evaluation is essential to improve programs and to account for funds.

In **symbols**, CSRL sealed a **time capsule** to be opened in 2050 which embedded an astonishing message from the Iowa State University President: *Dear People of the Year 2050: Greetings from the year 2018! This year we dedicated the Mpirigiti Rural Training Centre ... **main messages** ... Let us end hunger but let us never stop hungering for knowledge* (CSRL, 2018, p. ii). Such **symbols** have an intrinsic value, they bear a communally constructed meaning to the community beyond their imagination (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Ortner, 1973). The President's message reinforces the land grant ethos abroad, helping communities improve their livelihoods through livelihood education programs. In the CSRL's foundational book **Tapping Philanthropy**, the [then] CALS Dean [now President] said, *CSRL's goal is to redefine the word 'philanthropy' by taking it back to its more **classical meaning** – love for humanity* (CSRL, 2015, p. 1).

In the same theme of **symbols**, after a summer-long engagement with youth in establishing school gardens and related activities and working with communities, global service-learning students leave a mark, a **mural** painted on the walls of the compound. In 2015, *This year's mural... featured two hands, one black and one white, holding the world. A poignant quote captures the essence of the center's work: We all have two hands: One for helping yourself and one for helping others* (CSRL, 2015, p. 17). These **symbols** communicate identity, an important element in creating long-term belonging and comradeship among global service-learning alumni (Ikendi, Retallick et al., 2023). The CALS Dean said *No matter where we live, we value health, prosperity, and the ability to lead vital, happy, productive lives* (CSRL, 2022, p. 4).

In **ceremonies and celebrations**, CSRL celebrated the first decade of humanitarian deliverance in 2014, *CSRL celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014 – and made significant gains in advancing its mission to combat global hunger. Transformative change takes time ... something good is coming from Kamuli* (CSRL, 2014, p. 1). In 2024, CSRL also celebrated 20 years and the CSRL director [retired] said, *As I reflect on the multiple events held to commemorate this milestone, two words surfaced over and over: Innovation and Sustainability* (CSRL, 2024, p. 2). Earlier, in 2015, the service-learning program *Creating a School Garden: Service Learning in Uganda* (Banige et al., 2024a; 2024b; Ikendi, Retallick et al., 2023; Nonnecke et al., 2015) also celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and *students, faculty, and program alums came together. Guests reminisced, made new friends, and shared a bi-cultural meal* (CSRL, 2015, p. 17).

The Program Director reported in 2024 that *Service learning has changed significantly over the years. The director added that, in the first year, we could barely help the teachers teach, and we had a few school garden plots. We've grown from that to integrated binational team projects, daily school lunches, and providing daily porridge for younger children* (CSRL, 2024, p. 16). Also, in 2018, one of the achievements was made, *Mpirigiti Rural Training Centre officially opened in March 2018 with a ceremony involving 500 people, featuring the guest of honor, the King of Busoga* (CSRL, 2018, p. 4). In sum, ceremonies and celebrations are grander and bring together people, reassuring them of the vision on track, symbolizing triumph, and offering hope for the future (Bolman & Deal, 2021).

### Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

Drawing insights from the organizational management and leadership strategies, frames help to empower managers and leaders to understand their work praxis while combining artistic and scientific elements in their management and leadership dispensation for efficiency. In achieving managerial efficiency both artistic and scientific management styles across the structural and human resources frames are vital. Being passionate about employees, understanding their working style, and use of soft-skill communication tactics formed the ingredients of the artistic management style across all the cases analyzed in this case study. In the 2019 think tank, for instance, where participation involved experts in setting goals signaled scientific style, and the local community implied artistic. Overall participation of staff, leaders, and the community meant that decisions were made collectively. The directors played a **game manager's** role, entangled in management, leadership, supervision, and administration. The success of these twisted titles is depicted in servant leadership, empowerment, delegation of powers, and organizational reframing.

In dispensing leadership for efficiency, the leaders blended both the artistic and scientific leadership styles across the political and symbolic frames. Understanding employees' social and political environment (i.e., especially during periods of COVID-19 pandemic and flood catastrophe), effective communication tactics depicted the artistic aspect of leadership. Setting goals and monitoring them on the **mark** characterized the scientific style. Participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation, where the planning process involved experts signaled the scientific model, and the local community members implied the artistic model. Similarly, efficient communication through impact reports using stories depicting changes in household livelihoods, celebrations, and ceremonies culminated in the satisfaction of benefactors, beneficiaries, and the general community. For instance, it was out of effective leadership and strategic communication coupled with personal desires to make the world a better place that members got into self-drive to initiate fundraising campaigns with the passion to raise funds to move CSRL programs forward.

Our *recommendations focus on what techniques the current and aspiring leaders, managers, administrators, and supervisors can learn from this CSRL case study to improve their organizational operational effectiveness*. Leaders and managers who are thinking through the **structural** frame must acknowledge and understand that this frame is the structural **foundation** of their organizations. They must understand its key components such as the vision, mission, goals, objectives, and activities which ease the provision of resources, technology, and facilities to different program departments. In this structural frame, having a **vision** is the core of management, always get people **together** and discuss program operations.

Thinking through the **human resources** frame, leaders and managers must understand how to deal with employees, their work, and the environment. The goal of leaders and managers in this frame is to focus their energy on building **interpersonal** relationships among employees and the organization. Leaders and managers must professionally hold their subordinates **accountable** through appraisals based on program-set standards and goals. Confront subordinates who are not productive and hold them to standards; appreciate those who are productive, for instance, through awards and promotions. Leaders and managers must understand that **motivation** is key to helping subordinates succeed. The leaders' primary focus is to lead others to grow. Be supportive, empower everyone to perform, and overall never **waver** in your resolve to support your subordinates. The most rewarding aspect of leadership is when your subordinates succeed. Additionally, leaders and managers should **credit** subordinates' impacts in their communication. Verbal and/or written and **pick** on and/or **refer** them to elaborate on their idea(s). Leaders and managers should give credit to others before themselves, **listen** more than talk, and **focus** engagement on subordinates, especially through professional development programs for growth and to improve their performance.

Leaders and managers should systematically **climb** the ladder of promotion because skills develop stage by stage as you climb the ladder. People like leaders and managers who have experienced what they are experiencing now. **Love** people and **care** about them. In your leadership or management roles, you need to go by your strengths and build on them further. Do not be afraid of **mistakes**, the most important aspect of mistakes is to **acknowledge** them and revise for improvement. Leaders and managers should prepare for the challenging times, most important in these challenging times is not the solution but the **process** of providing the solution. A successful manager or leader can navigate potentially conflictual situations with an organization's **protocols** in mind while simultaneously knowing when to apply which aspect of the **frame(s)** best suits each unique circumstance.

In the **political** frame, leaders must understand that **politics** in organizations is all about resources and rationing/allocating them among program units. Leaders need skills in **coalition** and **negotiation** and use their **power** effectively in dealing with **conflicts** with delight. Resolving conflicts in organizations is not necessarily about following prescribed procedures and protocols; it also requires developing a personally informed art of tailoring both knowledge and structural mechanisms to specific situations. Leaders should recognize that there is no perfect management style, and you have to be yourself, **genuine**, and generous. **Network** with people for support and feedback especially through participatory planning, monitoring, and **evaluation** and through celebrations and other platforms, communicating program **impact** and **hope** for the future. For instance, program leadership should set goals in a participatory manner and monitor activities constantly through **internal** and **external evaluations** to assess program progress and devise improvements. As a good leader, you should mobilize the resources needed to **advocate** and fight for all units of the organization. Be **transparent** to account for donors and public funds to increase your social **credibility** in the institution and the institution's public face.

Organizational leaders and managers thinking through the **symbolic** frame ought to understand and maintain the organizational **ethos**. They must effectively **communicate** with the public in ways that maintain the credibility of their programs. A good leader is **visionary**, uses symbols, tells stories, and frames experiences in ways that give employees **hope**. CSRL leaders, for instance, used ceremonies and celebrations to bring stakeholders together, reassuring them of the vision on track, and also communicating in stories that reflect a change of livelihoods from poverty and malnutrition to engaging food production,

ensuring food and nutrition security as well as increasing their income generating strategies. As a leader, be ready to use your feelings and intuition to enhance **creativity**. Leaders are **risk-takers**, respond to life's dilemmas playfully, find meaning and faith amidst the confusion, and move programs with delight.

This study has implications for establishing techniques for improving the leadership and managerial effectiveness of multistakeholder organizations. Leadership and management of such organizations can be **complex** and challenging. Using Bolman and Deal's (2021) well-established **framework** as a tool for both framing and reframing can support the advancement and success of organizations. This study not only provides an example and findings specific to such an organization, but it also offers an **analytical strategy** for leaders of other organizations to use to enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management within their organizations.

In sum, leaders and managers should understand that management is not the greatest job, **but** it creates well-functioning systems. **Management** is all about the implementation of program activities, therefore, leaders and managers must know that things run on **time**. Leaders and managers need to support their subordinates in setting the program-specific goals, objectives, activities, and completion timelines which eases both internal and external evaluation of program outcomes. **Supervision** is about monitoring program components and assessments, and leaders ought to always check in with their line managers or supervisors to see how things are running in their departments. In **administration**, where you combine both leadership and management, do persuasion, exercise power to **influence**, be consistent, and calculate your reactions to every situation at the workplace. Effective administration needs effective leadership and management to move the program implementation strategies forward.

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