AGRICULTURE ON MISSION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NGO EXECUTIVE LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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To God be the glory, great things He hath done.
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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AGRICULTURE ON MISSION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NGO
EXECUTIVE LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

By
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The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of leadership
development as experienced by non-government organization (NGO) executive leaders
in international agricultural development. Data were collected from twelve executive
NGO leaders through in-depth interviews to understand the textural and structural
essences of the participants’ lived experiences of leadership development. Findings
indicated the integral role of mentoring in leadership development prior to obtaining an
executive leadership role, and the importance of establishing a peer network once the
position has been obtained. Findings also reflected the primarily self-directed efforts of
leadership development by executive leaders. This study also explored competencies
needed by and challenges faced by executive NGO leaders; findings reflected emergent
themes which included adaptive learning, people management, building awareness,
and succession planning. Key findings of this study supported the conceptual model
inclusive of leadership experiences, relevant competencies, and mentoring as mediating
factors of leadership development with efficacy. The study provided implications and
future research recommendation for executive leaders in international agricultural
development, as well as for leadership educators and practitioners.
In Serving God Globally: Finding Your Place in International Development, Faith Wise conveyed advice received from a missionary, “You can take all your kindheartedness and compassion and hope to change the world, but if you do not understand the world, then you can do a lot more damage than good” (Hoksbergen, 2012, p. 1). Agriculture has provided a common denominator for people around the world since the beginning of civilization; yet, climate, politics, technology, and other challenges have created various barriers and disparities both within and between countries. Contextual understanding is imperative for creating sustainable change through agricultural development work; committed leaders within local communities, as well as within development organizations, enable the progress of development efforts (Zamani & Karimi, 2006). The unifying, global effort of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the expansion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 at the UN Millennium Summit—calls for an “all hands on deck” approach inclusive of leadership from both secular and faith-based organizations (Duff, Battcock, Karam & Russell Taylor, 2016).

Poverty and hunger alleviation have remained a top priority of world leaders as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new agenda adopted by the 193 member states of the United Nations on September 25, 2015 included 17 global goals, of which the first was to end poverty by 2030, and the second was to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture (United Nations, 2015). The 2015 State of Food Insecurity in the World report noted, “About 795 million people are undernourished globally, down 167
million over the last decade” (FAO, IFAD, and WFP, p.1). The 2017 Hunger Report emphasized the significant progress against hunger and poverty with the hunger rate having been cut nearly in half from one in four in 1990 to one in nine in 2015 (Bread for the World Institute, 2016). Though such progress has been made through the MDGs and SDGs, focus must remain on fighting hunger and poverty to establish global food security for the world’s poorest (Bread for the World Institute, 2016; FAO, IFAD, and WFP, 2015; Feed the Future, 2014; Sachs, 2012). “Of the 5.5 billion people who live in developing countries, 3 billion live in rural areas. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for 86 percent of these rural households” (Dethier & Effenburger, 2012, p. 176-177). Agricultural development has been an integral piece of organized efforts toward poverty and hunger alleviation around the world.

For lasting change to occur, more developmental efforts will be needed—beyond relief and rehabilitation—and may require collaboration across various organizations with similar purposes (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). “Almost all the world’s societies acknowledge that they aim for a combination of economic development, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion, but the specific objectives differ globally, between and within societies” (Sachs, 2012, p. 2206). Over the past 50 years, numerous groups of sojourners—from tourists to students to missionaries and businesspeople—have enabled the development of cultural learning for improved intercultural connection and collaboration (Triandis, 2004). Also, to create better opportunities for agriculturalists around the world, research, development, politics, and policy must engage locals in these processes (Rivera-Ferre, 2008). Hoksbergen (2012) reflected this need for local engagement and collaboration, “Development is thus a constructive idea, one that asks
what we are to become, not one that just removes a problem” (p. 9). As the difficulties of hunger and poverty amplify each other, “We need new tools and a new approach that focuses on building resilience through local institutions, so that communities and countries can avoid, cope with, and bounce back from crises” (Bread for the World Institute, 2016, p. 6). At the opening ceremony of the Sustainable Development Summit, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized the collaborative promise by leaders to integrate this universal, transformative vision for global development (United Nations, 2015). Dethier and Effenburger (2012) further emphasized the leading role of government in initiating development efforts, but highlighted the need for private sector funding and organizational support to be balanced for the best development effort within a cultural context.

International agricultural development work through government agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been joined by over 65,000 non-governmental organizations around the globe in their development efforts (Hoksbergen, 2012). Thus, ample opportunities for collaboration have existed to ensure that needed training and skill development are provided with development projects. The achievement of the ambitious targets set forth through the SDGs for hunger and poverty alleviation will require innovative thinking, as stressed in the 2017 Hunger Report:

The innovations most needed are not so much technical or about treating hunger as a scientific problem. They are more about how to work together, smarter and more efficiently. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are the only way we as humanity will realize the majestic vision of the SDGs. Success will come through more and better partnerships, whether government to government, governments working with civil society groups, civil society working with the private sector, and other configurations. But most of all, it
requires participation from people who are living in poverty and enduring hunger. (Bread for the World Institute, 2016, p. 14)

Because agriculture has not just been a means of food production or economic gain, but is the very identity of millions of people, the utmost respect and care should be observed within development work (FAO, IFAD, & WFP, 2015; Rivera-Ferre, 2008).

**Background for the Study**

Hoksbergen (2012) noted, “development is about agriculture, culture, religion, identity, empowerment, gender, ethnicity, technology, health, business, politics, conflict, peacebuilding, urban planning, human rights, families, communities, environmental sustainability, international relations, and much, much more” (p. 10). These complex, interconnected aspects of development have been the focus of organizations purposed to serve others facing poverty and hunger throughout history. Sharma, Peshin, Khar, and Ishar (2014) noted:

Agricultural development depends to a great extent on how successfully knowledge is generated and applied. Investments in knowledge especially in the form of science and technology have features prominently and consistently in most strategies to promote sustainable and equitable agricultural development at the regional and national level. (p. 1)

Agricultural knowledge for development has been disseminated by “extension” services throughout history; “extension” is derived from educational efforts in England in the mid-19th century to take the work of the university to the local community members via community lectures (Jones & Garforth, 1997). These conceptual foundations of extension included agricultural topics later in the 19th century, yet agricultural knowledge sharing is traced in its basic form to ancient Mesopotamia (Dethier & Effenburger, 2012; Jones & Garforth, 1997). Modern extension services reflect a formalized system of knowledge dissemination and research to address complex and
diverse challenges of agriculturalists around the world (Dethier & Effenburger, 2012; Jones & Garforth, 1997).

Today, agricultural development work has engaged various personnel through extension, which has offered a diversity of activities, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Mercier (2012) provided additional insight to the formation of government-based international development support:

In late 1961, after passage of the Foreign Assistance Act, President John Kennedy established the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an independent agency with the primary mission of providing long-range economic and social development assistance around the world. [Yet,]…most international agricultural development activities do not fall under discrete named programs with specific Congressional authorization. … In selecting how to invest U.S. agricultural development funds, overall priorities are established centrally by USAID but the scope, and specifics of individual agricultural development projects are primarily determined on a country-by-country or regional basis by USAID Mission staff stationed in the country or region in consultation with recipient governments. (p. 3, 8)

Sharma, Peshin, Khar, and Ishar (2014) stressed, “While traditional agricultural research organizations still have a role to play in providing some of this knowledge, what is now required is a much more flexible arrangement in which dense networks of entrepreneurs, farmers, research, and training and policy organizations interact and respond to new circumstances” (p. 2). Each entity has offered a unique skill set and understanding of a culture; to not collaborate on these development issues would only limit the impact of the efforts (Mercier, 2012). Additionally, Dethier and Effenburger (2012) continued to emphasize the cultural and contextual understanding of issues through engagement of private corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society to maximize the effort, efficiency, and impact of poverty and hunger alleviation strategies (Caven, 2006; Jones & Garforth, 1997).
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gained momentum through the late 20th century, resulting in a strong global presence (Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2006). “NGOs remain as an important and large-scale presence on the landscape of international development” (Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2006, p. 665-666). The close work of NGOs with government entities necessitated strategic negotiation of complex relationships, and underscored the importance of senior management roles to face organizational challenges in maintaining autonomy while contributing to the development process (Hailey, 1999).

While agricultural development efforts can easily be focused on the technical aspects of improvement, Hoksbergen (2014) also emphasized that “development is also about our beliefs and values” (p. 10). Heist and Cnaan (2016) noted the prevalence of faith-based organizations, which can form extensive networks, build trust, and gather numerous volunteers to serve within a particular country that may be preferred over similar secular organizations due to their broad range of services. The goal in development has not simply been the disbursement or purchase of a product, but rather coming alongside those in poverty and hunger to assist them in learning to be better stewards of their lives (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). Such a call to relationally serve has drawn religious and other charitable organizations to be involved in agricultural development efforts (Jones & Garforth, 1997). Price, Sherman, and Yarger (2006) noted:

A small number of groups have full-time agricultural missionaries; however the majority of people we correspond with do not work primarily in agriculture. Rather, they are Bible translators, church planters, nurses, teachers, pilots, etc., who have seen the need for agricultural assistance among the people they serve and have responded to God’s call to spend a portion of their time in agriculture. (p. 4)
Clarke and Ware (2015) noted, “Organizations with a faith basis play a prominent, sometimes dominant, role within the non-government development sector” (p. 40). Faith-based organizations have provided assistance long before development work was conceptualized; Christian missions have been active for centuries around the world in various development fields (Lunn, 2009). Rakodi (2012) stressed, “religion and development are not separate spheres of life-they are intertwined and each influences the other” (p. 635). Faith-based and secular NGOs share organizational characteristics and contextual influences, yet are often differentiated by their motivations for development work (Ferris, 2005). Lincoln (2003) provided four domains to understand the differing components of a faith-based organization: believing, behavioral expectations, belonging, and boundary keepers (Deneulin & Bano, 2009; Ware & Clarke, 2016). Faith-based organization contributions to development reflect an intersection of identity, resources, and opportunities (Raney & Raveloharimisy, 2016). Additionally, Payne (2013) provided a reminder that cross-cultural relationships have been a command from the beginning for the church.

The 2014 Feed the Future Report indicated, “Partnership in agricultural development must begin with farmers on the ground” (p. 28). Utilizing supporting agricultural change agents, such as local extension personnel or nongovernment organization workers, has enabled the local farmers to integrate modern technologies with their indigenous knowledge (Feed the Future, 2014; Husnah, Ali, Salman, Hijjang, Djufray, & Amrawaty, 2014). Without such indigenous knowledge, agricultural development professionals have risked treating only the surface symptoms of the issue or misidentifying the underlying issue, which holds the potential to do more harm than
good (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). Additionally, Husnah, Ali, Salman, Hijjjang, Djufrı, and Amrawaty (2014) stressed, “Development of new techniques or perfecting an old practice to generate productivity without damaging practices and values that are conducive to the survival of local communities and the environment is very necessary to improve the competitiveness of rural areas” (p. 145). Partnerships have been key to agricultural development; their formation has been a necessary step to alleviate hunger and poverty and has been reflective of our global interdependence (Hoksbergen, 2014; Feed the Future, 2014). “Investments in agricultural development are essential to ending hunger” (Bread for the World Institute, 2016, p. 31). However, it is imperative to remember, “The direct involvement of national and local actors not only improves the effectiveness of efforts in progress, but also extends the impact” toward sustainable work (Bread for the World Institute, 2016, p. 27). To fight poverty and hunger issues around the globe, both local and global natural, material, social, knowledge, and spiritual resources must be identified and utilized (Dethier & Effenburger, 2012). With a common understanding that, “development is a lifelong process” (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012, p. 157), the underlying implication for leaders to carry out a global vision over time has indicated a need for understanding the leadership development experiences of current NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development.

**Research Problem**

Internationalization, globalization, and many other terminologies have been readily referenced throughout our world today. Regardless of the terminology utilized, the common emphasis has remained on the key result of a high-paced, intensive, and connected livelihood (Payne, 2013). With a growing population expected to reach 9 billion people by the year 2050 (FAO, 2015), agriculture has been the focus of
conversations among a diverse set of contexts, including international development. Though much work has to be done, “agricultural development experts often say if they do their jobs well, the end result is that they will work themselves out of their jobs entirely, by ending poverty in developing countries” (Mercier, 2012, p. 31). The 2014 Feed the Future report stressed a model for development, which emphasized partnerships to create a network of resources to both learn what tools and technologies would best fit a community and train them in various entrepreneurial skills. While training has been a key component of interventions through USAID for over 50 years, this approach [Knowledge Network project] to USAID missions emphasized sustainable change through human and institutional capacity development (HICD) with developing-country institutions (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). Sharma, Peshin, Khar, and Ishar (2014) echoed the needed innovative process inclusive of research, a diverse array of activities, collaborators and connections to create effective training and knowledge dissemination systems for sustainable agricultural development. To meet this challenge, additional leaders within the various aspects of international agricultural development are needed. Yet, succession is one of the largest concerns among non-government organization leaders. “The concern regarding the short supply of global leaders is exacerbated by the speed in which future leaders will need to be developed” (Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2015, p. 226).

Additionally, Caven (2006) heeded, “The good intentions and potential for outstanding results that we bring to another culture are often not enough. What we often miss in our approach is an adequate understanding of the culture and society we hope to impact” (p. 1). Cultural intelligence, which can also be referred to as intercultural
competence, has been reported as an imperative component for bridging divides and knowledge across an organization to reach a common understanding of the needs and current practices in an organization or community (Liao, 2015). Sharma, Peshin, Khar, and Ishar (2014) further emphasized:

Agricultural development depends more than ever on a process of continuous, incremental innovation. The scope of innovation includes not only technology and production but also organizations (in the sense of attitudes, practices, and new ways of working), management, and marketing changes, therefore requiring new types of knowledge not usually associated with agricultural research and new ways of using this knowledge. (p. 4)

Such a multifaceted approach to development has required a worldview that reflects an openness to both modern and indigenous knowledge and technologies for progress to occur in the agricultural sector (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012; Husnah, et al., 2014). In the Good Practices in Leveraging Long-term Training for Institutional Capacity Strengthening Report, Hervy and Gilboy (2014) identified “increasing but still limited attempts to build soft skills,” though skills such as management, communication, and leadership have been recognized as needed complements to the academic or technical training for agricultural development (p. 12). The combination of social and technical skills has been needed for adaptability in an ever-changing, global society (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012; Jones & Garforth, 1997). Sandage noted, “It’s not about knowing each and every culture; it’s about developing awareness, being humble and curious about others, asking the right questions, and looking at things from difference perspectives” (InTrust, 2013, p. 2). The triad of virtues, knowledge, and skills has enabled one to be an effective foreigner, an effective worker in development (Hoksbergen, 2012). The need for global leaders with the competencies to lead within complex, ambiguous environments around the world is reflected in the call for greater research-based
insights to better inform executive leaders on competencies needed and best practices for their development (Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2015).

Hailey (1999) provided a comprehensive overview of historical context within NGOs over the past 50 years, as addressed through the *Public Administration and Development* journal. He emphasized the considerable influence NGOs have had in directing development policy. Though various political, contractual, and strategic negotiations will continue in their close work with the government, “NGOs and other voluntary organizations are now recognized as fully active partners with government and, as such, fully deserve the respect researchers now give them” (Hailey, 1999, p. 482). In addition to determining the role of nongovernmental organizations in international development work, a key challenge noted by Hailey and James (2004) was, “The leadership of such development NGOs face extraordinary challenges as they work with very limited resources in uncertain and volatile political and economic circumstances to help the most marginalized and disadvantaged members of their communities” (p. 344). “NGO leaders clearly respond in different ways, but one common aspect is the way that they combine their idealism with hard analysis, technical expertise, and professionalism—while at the same time being able to communicate a vision and motivate a range of staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries” (Hailey, 2006, p. 16). Existing research related to project management in various other contexts has demonstrated a needed balance of personal attributes with applied technical understanding to impact development (Hailey, 2006; Hailey & James, 2004). Hailey (2006) noted, “The development of the competency approach is partly the result of the
growing interest among organizations as to how to attract the talent and how best to identify and recruit a new generation of leaders” (Hailey, 2006, p. 5).

A growing challenge within NGO leadership is the concern regarding the leadership gap and the development of a new generation of leaders in this field (Hailey, 2006; Landles-Cobb, Kramer, & Milway, 2015). While specific contextual research has been conducted regarding the role of leadership self-efficacy in Latina leaders in higher education (Montas-Hunter, 2012), educators and students (Bang & Reio, 2017; Phan & Locke, 2015), career advancement of women coaches (Machida & Feltz, 2013), business leaders (Javadin, Bullough, & Dibble, 2016; Paglis & Green, 2002; Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang, & Shi, 2005), and women leaders in the credit union industry (Garmon, 2007), no research was found within the field of international agricultural development. Thus, research is needed to explore the lived leadership development experiences of non-government organization executive leaders in international agricultural development to provide insights to the role of mediating practices between self-efficacy and leadership development to meet the identified rising challenges in the field.

**Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of lived leadership development experiences by non-government organization executive leaders in international agricultural development. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

2. Identify the structural essence of self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;
3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development; and

4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.

**Significance of the study**

"In a relatively short amount of time, agriculture has once again become the focus of politicians, consumers, scientists and environmentalists" (Rivera-Ferre, 2008, p. 1061). Such multidisciplinary focus has reflected the growing population statistics and, thus, the need for increased agricultural productivity and development. Brière, Proulx, Flores, and Laporte (2015) noted previous research in various contexts of project management in private sector work regarding needed competencies, but minimal research addressed such work in the NGO context. Given the limited body of research on executive NGO leaders (Hailey & James, 2004; McCann & Kowalski, 2015), rising leadership gap in NGOs (Carman, Leland, & Wilson, 2010; Froelich, et al., 2011; Padaki, 2007; Santora, Sarros, Bozer, Esposito, & Bassi, 2015), and increasing need for long-run development to address issues of poverty and hunger (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012; Bread for the World Institute, 2017), this study contributed to the understanding of leadership development experiences by NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development. The essence of these individual experiences provided insight to needed competencies for leadership within international agricultural development, various factors impacting leader self-efficacy, as well as the connection of self-efficacy sources to the structure of leadership development processes within the field – valued insights for continued leadership development and strengthening of leader efficacy in international agricultural development.
Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, and Harms (2008) conducted a meta-analysis to construct a conceptual framework of leadership efficacy that reflects the multi-level interactions of a leader, the follower, and collective efficacy toward leadership efficacy, which is evident through an organization’s collective agency and performance. Specifically, “Our aim was to define this expanded view of leadership efficacy and propose how it can impact across a broad range of organizational contexts, performance criteria, and domains of interest” (Hannah, et al, 2008, p. 688). The research team makes several propositions for future efficacy research, which is distinguished between leader and leadership efficacy. With the enhancement of the three areas of leadership efficacy (leader, follower, and collective), it is expected that leadership actions and initiatives would have a stronger impact through sustainable efforts. Specifically, leader efficacy is generalized into four areas: leader efficacy for thought, leader efficacy for action, leader efficacy for self-motivation, and leader efficacy for means. “Importantly, it is not the tool itself, but the person’s assessment or belief in the quality and utility of the tools to performing the task at hand that contributes to one’s level of means efficacy” (p. 686). They called for leadership efficacy research that explores the impact of various forms of efficacy within different roles and structures to inform leader development in specific contexts.

“Despite the potentially important role of self-efficacy beliefs in the leader development process, however, there is no well-developed theory or model explaining the process through which such beliefs influences development” (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011, p. 459). Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) examined the influences of self-efficacy on leader development through an analysis of four key self-
efficacy concepts: preparatory self-efficacy, efficacy spirals, learning self-efficacy, and resilient self-efficacy. The researchers acknowledged the complexity of leader development, as well as the contextual and individual differences that impact a leader’s self-efficacy. Based upon a literature review of leader development, Machida and Schaubroeck recommended two factors of influence on self-efficacy beliefs—developmental experiences (feedback, challenge, and support) and learning orientation—which would then impact a leader’s development. Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) concluded:

Coming to grips with this truism [leaders are constantly required to learn and develop in this rapidly changing world] requires a developmental process that comprehends the distinctions between leaders’ preparatory situations and their performance situations, identifies the personal and contextual factors that influence efficacy beliefs in leaders, and integrates a multifaceted perspective of leader efficacy in a way that promotes continuously positive learning trajectories. (p. 467)

Additional research to extrapolate the complex role of self-efficacy in leader development within various contexts is needed to verify this deeper conceptualization by the researchers. This study examined through a qualitative lens the various leadership development experiences of NGO executive leaders, various self-efficacy sources, and competencies needed to face contextual challenges in international agricultural development.

Toward the establishment of collaborative knowledge among training and development programs related to agriculture and food security, Hervy and Gilboy (2014) built upon the knowledge network that created a link between the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2013 for sharing best practices in training for human and institutional capacity development. Identified good practices included training,
mentoring, leadership development, service learning, professional networking, and building a dynamic alumni network, among others (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). This study contributed to the agricultural development field by exploring leadership development experiences of NGO leaders in international agricultural development that create an understanding of leadership pathways and structures within the agricultural development field. Such insights enabled development professionals to better prepare for future leadership needs within the industry, provided insight to higher education professionals for training and development of future leaders within the field, and identified competencies both transferable and necessary for leader development towards executive leadership roles.

This study addressed priority seven of the National Leadership Education Research Agenda, which focused on global and intercultural leadership (Andenoro, Allen, Haber-Currán, Jenkins, Sowcik, Dugan, & Osteen, 2013). This priority area has called for research addressing the complex organizational contexts of leadership, including cultural, social, and political factors that impact organizational operation across international boundaries. In regard to the development of needed competencies for organizational leaders in international agricultural development, this priority area also addressed the need for research to inform the foundations of intercultural, collaborative relationships. The duality of focus for individual and organizational development in global and intercultural leadership provided the impetus for this study focused on the leadership development experiences of NGO leaders in international agricultural development. This study also connected to the American Association for Agricultural Educators’ Research Priority 6: Vibrant, Resilient Communities (Roberts, Harder, &
Regarding Priority 6, Graham, Arnold, and Jayarante (2016) noted, “Further research is needed to understand and develop a mindset of leadership as a system that is enhanced and developed from an engaged and resilient community” (in Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, p. 50). The international agricultural development community needs systems level understanding by leaders in addressing complex challenges such as hunger and poverty with high efficacy.

**Definition of Terms**

- **Agency**: “the power to originate actions for given purposes” or “acts done intentionally” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).
- **Aspirations**: “ambitions, hopes, objectives, or desires” (Rockwell & Bennett, 2004, p. 6), represented in this study as a categorical label within identified competencies.
- **Attitudes**: “beliefs, opinions, feelings, or perspectives” (Rockwell & Bennett, 2004, p. 6), represented in this study as a categorical label within identified competencies.
- **Bracketing**: “This is the first step in “phenomenological reduction,” the process of data analysis in which the researcher sets aside as far as humanly possible, all preconceived experiences to best understand the experiences of participants in the study” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.284).
- **Causation**: “functional dependence between events” (Bandura, 1997, p. 5).
- **Collective efficacy**: “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 477).
- **Clusters of meanings**: “This is the third step in phenomenological data analysis. In which the researcher clusters the statements into themes of meaning units, removing overlapping and repetitive statements” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.284).
- **Determinism**: “the production of effects by events, rather than in the doctrinal sense that actions are completely determined by a prior sequence of causes independent of the individual” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1182).
- **Development**: “Improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements. Development may occur due to some
deliberate action carried out by single agents or by some authority preordered to achieve improvement, to favourable circumstances in both” (Bellù, 2011, p. 2).

- **Efficacy expectation**: “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcome” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

- **Emotional Arousal or Physiological and Affective States**: A source of self-efficacy based upon attribution, relaxation, biofeedback, symbolic desensitization, or symbolic exposure (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997).

- **Essence**: “This is the goal of the phenomenologist, to reduce the textural (what) and structural (how) meanings of experiences to a brief description that typifies the experiences of all of the participants in the study. All individuals experience it; hence, it is invariant, and it is a reduction to the “essentials” of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.284).

- **Executive Leader**: Within the context of this study, this term reflects individuals holding formal positions as Chief Executive Officers, Executive Directors, or positions with comparable responsibilities.

- **Food Security**: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2003, p. 29).

- **Global leadership**: “The process of influencing others to adopt a shared vision through structures and methods that facilitate positive change while fostering individual and collective growth in a context characterized by significant levels of complexity, flow and presence” (Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012, p. 500 in Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2015, p. 226).

- **Global leader**: “An individual who inspires a group of people to willingly pursue a positive vision in an effectively organized fashion while fostering individual and collective growth in a context characterized by significant levels of complexity, flow and presence” (Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012, p. 500 in Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2015, p. 226).

- **Horizonalization**: “This is the second step in the phenomenological data analysis in which the researcher lists every significant statement relevant to the topic and gives it equal value” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.284).

- **Intercultural competency**: “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2004, p. 194).

- **Knowledge**: “learned information or accepted advice” (Rockwell & Bennett, 2004, p. 6).
• **Leader self-efficacy**: “Leaders’ confidence in their abilities, knowledge, and skills in areas needed to lead others effectively” (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011, p. 460).

• **Leadership efficacy**: “A specific form of efficacy associated with the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with leading others” (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008, p. 669).

• **Leadership self-efficacy**: “A person’s judgement that he or she can successfully exert leadership by setting a direction for the work group, building relationships with followers in order to gain their commitment to change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change” (Paglis & Green, 2002, p.217).

• **Leader development**: “The process by which individuals learn and develop leadership skills and abilities necessary for effectiveness in leadership positions” (Dragoni, et al., 2009 in Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011, p. 459).

• **Lived experiences**: “This term is used in phenomenological studies to emphasize the importance of individual experiences of people as conscious human beings” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.285).

• **Motivation**: “activation and persistence of behavior…partly rooted in cognitive activities” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

• **Outcome expectancy**: “a person’s estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).

• **Performance Accomplishments or Enactive Mastery Experience**: A source of self-efficacy based upon participant modeling, performance desensitization, performance exposure, or self-instructed performance (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997).

• **Phenomenon**: “This is the central concept being examined by the phenomenologist. It is the concept being experienced by subjects in a study” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.285).

• **Self-efficacy**: “Beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3; Bandura, 1998, p.51).

• **Skills**: “mental and physical abilities to use new or alternative practices” (Rockwell & Bennett, 2004, p. 6).

• **Specific self-efficacy**: “Beliefs in one’s capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands” (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408).
• **Structural description**: “From the first three steps in phenomenological data analysis, the researcher writes a description of “how” the phenomenon was experienced by individuals in the study” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.286).

• **Sustainable development**: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (from the World Commission on Environment and Development’s (the Brundtland Commission) report Our Common Future (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

• **Textural description**: “From the first three steps in phenomenological data analysis, the researcher writes about what was experienced, a description of the meaning individuals have experienced” (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell, 2013, p.286).

• **Triadic Reciprocal Causation**: “transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behavior; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally” (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997, p. 6).

• **Technical competency**: The appropriate application of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or aspirations in a specific technical context (Roberts, Stedman, Harder, Gouldthorpe, & Coers, 2013)

• **Vicarious Experience**: A source of self-efficacy based upon live modeling or symbolic modeling (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997).

• **Verbal Persuasion**: A source of self-efficacy based upon suggestion, exhortation, self-instruction, or interpretive treatments (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997).

**Limitations**

The findings of this study should be evaluated with understanding of the following limitations:

• The data included in this study were collected through qualitative means from a purposive sample. Thus, results could not be generalized beyond the sample.

• The researcher was the only means for data collection and analysis; Data collection and analysis can be influenced by the researcher’s bias; however, this can be reduced through the use of triangulation and accessing multiple points of data to merit the credibility of the study.
Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study:

- The participants of this study were truthful in their responses.
- The study used in-depth interviews, print resources, and observation to control for the influences of researcher bias.

Chapter Summary

Poverty and hunger concerns have provided a common need and connection to agricultural development efforts throughout history. From the formation of USAID and the FAO to extension services and non-governmental organizations, many organizations representing the viewpoint of agriculture have been working toward the alleviation of hunger and poverty. However, development has been a complex entity that combines multiple facets of a society (Hoksbergen, 2012). Development has engaged partnerships with both other organizations and local people to come alongside the work needed. Investing in such relationship has been a recognized indicator of the multiple aspects of society. Relational ties have enabled meaningful connections to be made across organizations and perceived barriers. While partnerships have been desired within agricultural development, the identification of competencies needed to lead in the field of international agricultural development has assisted various agencies in continued leadership development efforts to address the challenges faced in this field.

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of lived leadership development experiences by executive NGO leaders in international agricultural development. Through in-depth qualitative interviews that explored the phenomenon of leadership development in executive leaders of international agricultural development
NGOs and data analyses, this study identified the common themes of leadership development experiences, perceived competencies needed, perceived challenges in the field, and the implications of leader self-efficacy to leader development. Government and non-governmental organizations have provided a wide range of training, depending upon the task set and individuals assigned to a task. Yet, a gap in the literature existed concerning empirical research on leader self-efficacy and leader development within the context of international agricultural development. Data identifying competencies for leadership development in international agricultural development work will benefit various agricultural development organizations, higher education professionals, and others with a similar interest to travel and lead appropriately in various contexts. This research met an identified need in the National Agricultural Leadership Education Research Agenda (2013); specifically, priority area 7, which focuses on intercultural development. Additionally, this research contributed to the American Association of Agricultural Education Research Agenda (2016) priority 6, which addresses impact and engagement of local communities toward the advancement of leadership and educational programs.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of leadership development experiences by NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

2. Identify the structural essence of self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development; and

4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.

Albert Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory provided the theoretical framework for this study, with supporting literature from McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership and Paglis and Green’s (2002) leadership self-efficacy model to frame the Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development. Literature and empirical studies relevant to the elements of leadership self-efficacy and relevant competencies within the conceptual model were explored to provide additional context. The chapter was concluded by literature and empirical studies related to challenges in international agricultural development, the role of non-government organizations in international agricultural development, and leadership in non-government organizations.
Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1977) introduced social learning theory as a mediator between behaviorist and cognitive theories, which explains human behavioral learning as primarily observational and modeled. However, Bandura (1977; 1982) continued to research this link between cognitive and behavioral processes where self-efficacy progressed as an integral component of social cognitive theory (1986), renaming social learning theory to better reflect the influence of cognitive processes on human motivation and behavior. “Social cognitive theory encompasses a large set of factors that operate as regulators and motivators of established cognitive, social, and behavioral skills” (Bandura, 1997, p. 35). Bandura (1977) noted, “People will approach, explore, and try to deal with situations within their self-perceived capabilities, but they will avoid transactions with stressful aspects of their environment they perceive as exceeding their ability” (p. 203). “Perceived self-efficacy occupies a pivotal role in social cognitive theory because it acts upon the other classes of determinants” (Bandura, 1997, p. 35). Bandura (1977) demonstrated four key sources of efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Performance accomplishments identify efficacy gained through personal mastery experiences, both through successes and the occasional failure (Bandura, 1977). Vicarious experience is identified as a source of self-efficacy with recognition that personal performance accomplishments are not the sole means of gaining experience; “seeing others perform threatening activities without adverse consequences can generate expectations in observers that they too will improve if they intensify and persist in their efforts” (Bandura, 1977, p. 197). Verbal persuasion reflected a readily available means of influence to lead people into believing they can handle a situation that was
previously overwhelming (Bandura, 1977). However, Bandura (1977) noted, "efficacy expectations induced in this manner are also likely to be weaker than those arising from one’s own accomplishments because they do not provide an authentic experiential base for them" (p. 198). Emotional arousal is identified by Bandura (1977) as the fourth source of self-efficacy perception, connecting the perceived debilitated judgement in the height of stress or emotional response to a situation; this emotive response can impair one’s efficacious beliefs. Bandura (1977) emphasized the growing prominence of self-efficacy expectations within cognitive thought processes, as well as the importance of contextual factors contributing to the variance of expectations and sources of efficacious belief. These efficacy expectations may vary in magnitude, generality, and strength; however, all three dimensions of efficacy expectations have implications on behavioral outcomes (Bandura, 1977).

“Given appropriate skills and adequate incentives, however, efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people’s choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and of how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). Bandura (1998) also observed that competencies are expressed and developed in various ways. Competency development is rooted in the psychosocial systems—identity, beliefs, values, abilities, etc.—that provide lenses to experiences and regulate internal and external influences being processed in our lives (Bandura, 1989; 2002). “People’s beliefs about their capabilities can have a profound effect on the direction their development takes” (Bandura, 1988, p. 281). Bandura (1986, 1988) explained an emergent and interactive model at the foundation of social cognitive theory, a model of triadic reciprocal causation (Figure 2-1). “In this causal
model, behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bidirectionally” (Bandura, 1988, p. 276). As such, its personal, behavioral, and environmental factors enable explanation of personal development and change processes in various cultures (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2002). Bandura (1989) noted:

Persons are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of animating environmental influences. Rather, they make causal contribution to their own motivation and action within a system of triadic reciprocal causation. In this model of reciprocal causation, action, cognitive, affective, and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants. (p. 1175)

Throughout time, people have adapted to various environments, rapidly changing technologies, and diversifying cultural norms; these agentic, self-regulating capabilities in response to such changes are at the base of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 2002). “Whatever other factors serve as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce desired effects by one’s actions. . . . Self-efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes” (Bandura, 2002, p. 270).

Bandura (1977) explained, “In the social learning theory, self-efficacy is conceptualized as arising from diverse sources of information conveyed by direct and mediated experience. . . . Expectations of personal efficacy do not operate as dispositional determinants independently of contextual factors” (p. 203). Self-efficacy beliefs impact the level of human function and action through motivation and other cognitive processes (Bandura, 1989; 2002). Bandura (1989) also explained the impact of self-efficacy on one’s environment:

Judgments of personal efficacy also affect selection of environments. People tend to avoid activities and situations they believe exceed their
coping capabilities, but they readily undertake challenging activities and select social environments they judge themselves capable of handling. Any factor that influences choice behavior can profoundly affect the direction of personal development because the social influences operating in the environments that are selected continue to promote certain competencies, values, and interests long after the decisional determinant has rendered its inaugurating effect. (p. 1178)

Bandura (1998) further emphasized, “In these agentic transactions, people are producers as well as products of social systems” (p. 62). Social structure provide organized means of guidance through contextual understanding of behavioral expectations; such structure enables resources and avenues for personal development (Bandura, 1998). Bandura (1998) specified various efficacy indicators within the four identified sources of efficacy expectations (Figure 2-2). Bandura (1977; 1988; 1989) noted the need for various efficacy sources to be cognitively processed, considered, and applied with self-reflection. Two functions enable the cognitive processing of these various sources of efficacy information: self-appraisal and integration of combinations of these sources towards efficacy judgements (Bandura, 1998). “There is much work to be done in the integrative aspect of the efficacy judgement process” (Bandura, 1998, p. 55). Social cognitive theory provides a framework for equipping people with efficacious belief, competencies, and capabilities to manage their personal psychological well-being and positively impact their behavior and influence on their contextual environment (Bandura, 1988).

Within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy contributed to the conceptualization of collective efficacy, which emphasized the interaction of personal and environmental factors to influence and produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1998).

People’s beliefs in their collective efficacy influence the type of futures they seek to achieve; how well they use their resources; how much effort they put into their group endeavor; their staying power when collective
Bandura (2002) emphasized the importance of collective efficacy in advancing common interests of global systems and human wellbeing as internationalization continues to impact increasingly more aspects of our livelihood. Bandura (1989) emphasized, “People must have a robust sense of personal efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed” (p. 1176). He continued, “Because the acquisition of knowledge and competencies usually requires sustained effort in the face of difficulties and setbacks, it is resiliency of self-belief that counts” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1176). Collective efficacy reflects an emergent group attribute connected to the various group dynamics and coordination (Bandura, 2002). Opportunities for observational learning and learner modeling related to competency development continue to evolve and enable the transfer of behavioral concepts to actions in dynamic environments (Bandura, 1977; 1998; 2002). Bandura (2002) also noted, “Because of extensive global interconnectedness the actions of forces operating remotely now produce local effects. What happens economically and politically in one part of the world can affect the lives of vast populations elsewhere” (p. 283). “The growing interdependence of social and economic life requires effective collective action at both local and transnational levels” (Bandura, 1998, p. 67). Bandura (1998) stressed, “Group achievements and social change are rooted in self-efficacy” (p. 66). The local and global applications discussed address the transferability and relevance of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1995; 1998; 2002).
Social Cognitive Model of Leadership

McCormick (2001) described leadership as, “a complex cognitive and behavioral task that takes place in a dynamic social context” (p. 28). McCormick’s (2001) model (Figure 2-3) merged Bandura’s (1982; 1986) social cognitive theory and self-efficacy concept with goal theory (Locke & Latham, 1990); thus, personal goals and self-efficacy are central to this model of self-regulated behavior. “Adapting the self-regulation model to the leadership process produces a conceptual framework that includes a person’s sense of confidence that they can perform the leadership role within an established theoretical system” (McCormick, 2001, p. 30). McCormick (2001) proposed this centralized focus on self-efficacy, which reflected the application of Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory into the leadership process. Bandura’s (1977) model of reciprocal determination was contextualized with a leadership focus by McCormick (2001) (Figure 2-4). “Social cognitive theory provides a framework for understanding the nature of leaders’ cognitions and the process by which these cognitions interact to produce leader behaviors” (McCormick & Martinko, 2004, p. 3). McCormick (2001) proposed that, “variations in leader cognitions, leader behaviors, and the leadership environment are necessary and sufficient to account for variations in leader effectiveness” (p. 24). As a trusted paradigm by researchers and practitioners in leadership, this concept is readily applied into the field of leadership but has limited research on its implications for leadership training and development processes (McCormick, 2001).

“Leadership self-efficacy, which is proposed as the central cognitive variable in the model, is defined as one’s self-perceived capability to perform the cognitive and behavioral functions necessary to regulate group process in relation to goal
achievement” (McCormick, 2001, p. 30). It is integral to the leadership process (Figure 3), as it impacts a leader’s selection of goals, motivation, strategic direction, and abilities to fulfill the identified task(s) (McCormick, 2001). McCormick and Martinko (2004) emphasized that leadership self-efficacy plays an integral role in a leader confidently utilizing his or her abilities to enable effective group progress toward a performance goal; a task ever present in today’s complex and changing environment. “The social cognitive approach views the person as being goal directed and proactively involved in shaping the task environment. Further, it holds that cognitive processes and other personal resources underlie the behavior strategies chosen and the skill with which they are executed” (McCormick, 2001, p. 24). McCormick (2001) demonstrated these connective links of supporting research between a leader’s performance with personal goals and self-efficacy, mediated through strategic efforts and personal motivations. Also, “the self-regulation model posits that high self-efficacy will lead individuals to set challenging goals, persist in the face of obstacles, work harder on tasks, direct cognitive and behavioral resources toward goal relevant actions, and actively search for effective task strategies” (McCormick, 2001, p. 26).

“Leaders are efficacious individuals” who are “engaged in self-regulation in a complex and ever changing task setting, the leadership situation” (McCormick, 2001, p. 28). “The social cognitive model of leadership proposes that managerial leaders who are confident of their leadership capabilities will select higher goals and deploy their skills and efforts more effectively than those beset by self-doubt.” (McCormick, 2001, p. 31). Thus, McCormick (2001) emphasized the responsibility of leadership training and development in organizations to incorporate aspects of self-efficacy into such work.
Leadership Self-Efficacy Model

Paglis and Green (2002) defined leadership self-efficacy as “a person’s judgement that he or she can successfully exert leadership by setting a direction for the work group, building relationships with followers in order to gain their commitment to change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change” (p. 217). Individual, subordinate, superior, and organizational antecedents are noted as potential areas of influence on leadership self-efficacy judgements in their leadership self-efficacy model (Figure 2-5). Regarding individual antecedents, “believing that goals are achievable largely through one’s efforts, rather than a product of chance or circumstance, should enhance managers’ perceptions of their ability to lead change (Paglis & Green, 2002, p. 218). In addition to accounting for a managers’ self-efficacy for leading change efforts, subordinates’ skills, attitudes, and other attributes are factors to consider in assessing the opportunities for a successful change effort (Paglis & Green, 2002). Expectations from a superior when coupled with effective modeling or coaching behaviors can impact a manager’s self-efficacy toward implementing change initiatives (Paglis & Green, 2002). The final category of antecedents in Paglis and Green’s (2002) model of leadership self-efficacy addressed the need for organizational opportunities in setting direction, developing relationships, building commitment, and tackling obstacles that enable managers to build confidence toward leading change initiatives. The various antecedents proposed provided the foundation for leadership self-efficacy, which Paglis and Green (2002) noted, “influences the activities that he or she chooses to engage in” (p. 221). A manager’s commitment to his or her organization, as well as perceived context for leadership effort, is directly impacted by his or her leadership self-efficacy (Paglis & Green, 2002). While this three-dimensional construct
of leadership self-efficacy—including direction setting, gaining commitment, and overcoming obstacles—provided additional insight to various inputs to leadership self-efficacy, its variables of influence need further research to validate the model.

**Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development**

A conceptual model was created to show the application of Bandura’s (1986) Model of Reciprocal Determinism to the context of executive NGO leadership development within international agricultural development (Figure 2-6). The concept of reciprocal determinism posits that personal, behavioral, and environmental factors interact with each other; thus, the foundation of the conceptual model reflects McCormick’s (2001) application of Bandura’s (1986) model to include the Leadership Environment, Leadership Behaviors, and Leadership Cognitions and Other Personal Factors. Centered within the triad is the phenomenon of interest for this study, Leadership Development; dotted arrows from the phenomenon to each of the triads indicates an unknown impact of leadership development on each of the triad elements.

Within this conceptual model, the leadership environment reflected a broad understanding of international agricultural development work. The United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (global issues of poverty, hunger, etc.), provided the contextual framework in understanding the integral role the agricultural industry must play for developing solutions to global issues through the work of non-government organizations facilitating international agricultural development work. The SDGs also demonstrated the need for leadership in making progress toward benchmarks and goals of this magnitude. Additionally, the leadership environment presents potential
organizational challenges or barriers for executive leaders regarding leadership
development efforts.

Leadership behaviors within the conceptual model reflected the competencies
needed to effectively lead within this complex leadership environment. This element is
integrally connected to both the leadership environment and leadership cognitions and
personal factors. The challenges faced at all levels of leadership—international,
national, government, public, and private—have implications on a leader’s behavior and
ability to competently respond. While behaviors were not directly observed within this
study, it is assumed that efficacious belief and competency of a leader influence
behavior choices.

Leader cognition and personal factors of the reciprocal causation structure were
concerned with role of self-efficacy to the social cognitive process and specific inquiry to
the impact of various efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977) on leadership development.
as an integral component to leader cognition, and Paglis and Green’s (2002) model
provided insight to the importance of self-efficacy to leadership development. Bandura’s
(1977) four efficacy expectations are listed within the conceptual model as a direct
impact on overall leader self-efficacy.

The focus of this study was the conceptualization of mediating practices between
integrative cognitive processing of efficacy expectations and leadership development.
Based upon Bandura’s (1977) efficacy expectations, McCormick’s (2001) leader
cognition and other personal resources, and Paglis and Green’s (2002) antecedents of
leadership self-efficacy, three mediating practices were identified for exploration:
leadership experience, relevant competencies, and mentoring. These practices are identified in the conceptual model within a dotted box, with dotted arrows representing the connection of inquiry between the phenomenon and self-efficacy. McCormick (2001) also integrated leadership experiences as an influencer of leader self-efficacy, as well as leader knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) as a contributing element toward leader motivation and behavior. These three components provided the structure for implications of this study; the triadic elements offered the structure for exploring the various influences on leadership development. The focus of this qualitative inquiry was the phenomenon of leadership development within the context of executive, non-government organizational leaders in international agricultural development.

### Related Literature on the Conceptual Model

**Leader Self-Efficacy**

Hannah, Avolio, Luthan, and Harms (2008) embarked on a review of literature related to leader efficacy, defined as “beliefs in their perceived capabilities to organize the positive psychological capabilities, motivation, means, collective resources, and courses of action required to attain effective, sustainable performance across their various leadership roles, demands, and contexts” (p. 670). Sixteen articles were identified as direct explorations of leader self-efficacy, four articles explored subdomains of leadership self-efficacy, and an additional twenty articles examined various aspects of collective efficacy or interactions of leadership with follower/other means of efficacy. Toward the advancement of leader efficacy and leadership efficacy, several propositions were made throughout the integration of previous research from the field. The researchers proposed a framework for leader efficacy and leadership efficacy that encompassed the leader, follower, and collective efficacy; additionally, the researchers
posited a structure of leader efficacy to further explore critical domains of thought, self-motivation, means, and action. Hannah, et al. (2008) concluded, “as the field of leadership development moves forward by building interventions based on well tested theory, we expect that focusing on leadership self-efficacy will enhance the impact of such interventions on leader and follower development” (p. 688).

Chan and Drasgow (2001) addressed calls for multivariate approaches by integrating the process of leader development with leadership performance. Their study of Singapore military recruits, Singapore junior college students, and U.S. undergraduate students sought to measure various antecedents to the conceptualize motivation to lead, of which the antecedents included a measure of leadership self-efficacy and indicators of past leadership experience and cognitive ability. An underlying assumption of this study was the differences in motivation to lead were directly impacted by leadership experience and leadership self-efficacy. The study found that, “leadership self-efficacy partly mediates the relationship between various distal antecedents (e.g. cognitive ability, personality, leadership experience, values) and MTL [motivation to lead]” (p. 484). “The hierarchical regression analyses for affective identity and social-normative MTL showed that extraversion, conscientiousness, and past leadership experiences were consistently related to leadership self-efficacy” (p. 492). These connections also suggested the opportunity for social learning processes and experience to affect a leader’s motivation to lead. Thus, it is suggested that leader development may link various antecedents to leadership performance.

Garmon (2007) sought to “identify and describe the sources of self-efficacy that facilitated the participants’ choices to pursue the resilience required to obtain leadership
positions in the credit union industry in the southeastern portion of the United States” (p. 6). The relationship between self-efficacy and career development was explored to provide insight into strengthening self-efficacy antecedents that may influence leadership development. The purposive sample included 20 women in executive leadership positions within the industry of interest. Interview narratives were analyzed to highlight the self-efficacy antecedents utilized along the leadership pathway. Results were categorized within the framework of Bandura’s (1977; 1997) sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, social models, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Though complementary to the current body of research on self-efficacy and leadership, Garmon (2007) recommended additional research to enlighten the diagnostic and prescriptive potential of self-efficacy beliefs in various leadership contexts.

“Indeed, the link between efficacy, effort and performance is perhaps one of the best established relationships in the behavioral sciences” (Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang, & Shi, 2005, p. 3). Walumbwa, et al. (2005) explored how self-efficacy mediated transformational leadership impact on followers’ work-related attitudes. This study included 37 bank branches (n=644) from China, India, and the United States to facilitate a greater understanding of how self-efficacy is influenced by contextual or cultural elements. Findings indicated a moderating effect of self-efficacy on transformational leadership and both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Results also suggested the complex and integral role of self-efficacy in the relationship between transformational leaders and their followers. Walumbwa, et al. (2005) offered practical
applications and recommendations for leadership training and development to enhance followers’ commitment and job satisfactions as additional products of this study.

Anderson, Krajewski, Goffin, and Jackson (2008) aimed to empirically develop a taxonomic structure of leadership self-efficacy pertinent to leadership effectiveness. The researchers included 44 middle- to executive-level managers in interviews to establish a domain of leadership effectiveness. Two instruments were created based upon the 73 identified dimensions from the interviews, which were further developed through analysis of relevant literature to create a catalogue of 88 leadership attributes. Additionally, researchers engaged 251 managers with the two developed instruments – one a self-evaluation and the other distributed to 10 raters as a 360 degree feedback tool. A third phase utilized modified canonical correlation analyses to explore the interrelations between leadership effectiveness taxonomic structures and leadership self-efficacy. A nine-dimension leadership effectiveness taxonomy was developed as a result of this study. Additionally the researchers noted, “The current results suggest that it may be more appropriate to conceptualize the LSE domain as containing several discrete dimensions as opposed to being a single, broad aggregate” (p. 605). Results also demonstrated the potential predictive value of isolating various self-efficacy beliefs. Anderson, et al. (2008) emphasized the need for additional research to determine the impact of interventions and training on how to change leadership self-efficacy, as well as its impact on leadership effectiveness.

McCann and Kowalski (2015) conducted an electronic survey of human and community services organization directors that included demographic questions, as well as the Financial Management, Advocacy, and Marketing Self-Efficacy Scale (FAMSES)
developed for the study. Findings indicated higher self-efficacy in areas of specific training and various unique combinations of skills and capabilities of the participants (n=95, 49% response rate). Results demonstrate the need for extended research of human and community service organization directors to better understand their multifaceted roles and various sources of self-efficacy to perform the many required tasks in their role, as well as the effectiveness of various training sessions pertaining to their roles.

“In order for managers to feel confident in their ability to lead change efforts, their jobs need to provide them the opportunity to set new directions, build relationship and gain followers’ commitment, and take the actions necessary to overcome obstacles” (Paglis & Green, 2002, p. 218). Paglis and Green’s (2002) interest lied in the leadership of change and opportunities for improvement within organizations. The study included two organizations where surveys were distributed to managers and their direct reports or level of management where change initiatives could be moved forward (n=150 managers, 79% response; n=415 direct reports, 61% response). The provided survey addressed data points related to leadership self-efficacy (LSE), organizational commitment, and perceived crisis; LSE antecedent information was collected from both managers and direct reports. The construct accounted for twelve items that addressed managers’ self-perceived capability to execute change-leading behaviors in an organization in three dimensions: direction setting, building follower’s commitment to change, and overcoming obstacles to these changes. While these measures merited significant relation to the three existing measures of perceived leadership abilities, additional work is needed to strengthen the validity and reliability of these constructs.
“Efficacy perceptions influence how much stress a person experiences when faced with difficult challenges” (p. 221). Paglis and Green (2002) also acknowledged the need for future research that deepens the understanding of leadership self-efficacy’s mechanisms of influence on managerial behavior; such research can underscore the importance of leadership development opportunities and their ultimate impact on change behaviors.

“Among the different modes of altering self-beliefs of efficacy, performance experiences are especially influential” (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408). Wood and Bandura (1989) explored the conception of ability in complex decision-making scenarios and its impact on various self-regulatory influences of motivation. Their study included 20 men and 4 women in a graduate business program who were placed in a simulated organization for a project in managerial decision making. Eighteen trials were performed, with specific concepts of ability in self-regulatory measures following trials 6, 12, and 18. Effective application of personal skills accounted for variations in performance. “An ability is only as good as its execution” (p. 414). One’s perceived self-efficacy or conception of ability for a specific task can both positively or negatively impact self-regulatory factors and directly or indirectly impact organizational analytical strategies and performance. The path analysis provided a visual connection of past performance to self-efficacy, as well as the reciprocal impact of self-efficacy on performance.

Anderson and Betz (2001) sought to develop a measure of self-efficacy expectations, then compare the developed instrument to prior research result concerning mathematic self-efficacy sources. The first sample included 229 student
participants (120 male and 109 female) enrolled in an introductory psychology course; this sample was utilized for a preliminary exploration of the instrumentation. The second sample included 250 university undergraduate psychology students (166 female and 84 male). Participants were given the following assessment tools: Social Sources Scale, Skills Confidence Inventory, the Self-Efficacy Scale, the Social Anxiety subscale of the Self-Consciousness Scale, Shyness Scale, and Beck Depression Inventory. Results were correlated and indicated a cluster of direct personal experiences (past performance, social persuasion, and emotional arousal) in addition to indirect experience (vicarious learning) reflected two domains of efficacy expectations. Findings were consistent with sources of mathematic self-efficacy; however, further research is needed to determine its impact on vocational development (Anderson & Betz, 2001).

Javidan, Bullough, and Dibble (2016) examined gender differences in global leadership self-efficacies. The researchers utilized the Global Mindset Inventory to survey a random sample of 1,187 managers representing 74 countries. Findings of this study indicate gender as an important variable that reflects the different self-efficacy strengths in each gender. Regarding intercultural empathy, diversity, and diplomacy, women showed a stronger self-efficacy, whereas men demonstrated stronger global self-efficacy in areas such as interpersonal outlook and business savvy. While several implications and research recommendations were made, of pertinence was the recommendation for future research to focus on senior leaders (i.e. CEOs) to comparatively evaluate global self-efficacy and mindset to their organizational employees.
Phan and Locke (2015) explored the sources of self-efficacy that Vietnamese teachers rely upon to inform their teaching self-efficacy beliefs. This qualitative case study utilized eight university teachers of English language at a technical Vietnam university. Data included individual interviews, journal entries, and observations. Findings indicated social persuasion as the greatest influence of self-efficacy belief for the teachers, followed by vicarious experiences, physiological/affective states, and mastery experiences as supportive sources of efficacy information. This study made several recommendations for potentially raising the self-efficacy of teachers, including collective work with other teachers, in-service pedagogical development for handling various students, and the need to understand more deeply the social persuasion power of leaders within the university. A longitudinal study was recommended for deeper understanding of these sources of self-efficacy of teachers.

“Every experience toward leadership attainment is different for every individual, and different factors affect how successful we are as leaders” (Montas-Hunter, 2012, p.333). In her study of Latina leaders in higher education, Montas-Hunter (2012) utilized phenomenological methods to explore the role of self-efficacy beliefs in the participants’ leadership experiences and opportunities. Eight participants met the established criteria and completed an online, open-ended questionnaire concerning identity, self-efficacy, and leadership. Four common themes emerged through the various leadership experiences of the participants: strong sense of values, support networks, self-awareness, and professional opportunities. “Attainment of leadership positions for Latinas in higher education is achieved through high self-efficacy along with a strong sense of self” (p. 333). Recommended further research connected to the potential
impact of formal leadership programs with elements of self-efficacy on leadership achievement.

"Leadership self-efficacy is a person’s judgement that he or she can successfully exert leadership by setting a direction for the work group, building relationships with followers in order to gain their commitment to change goals, and working with them to overcome obstacles to change” (Paglis & Green, 2002, p. 217). Wood and Bandura (1989) further emphasized the affect self-efficacy beliefs have on challenges accepted, expended effort to accomplish a task, the grit to persevere in difficult circumstances, positive or negative thought processes, and the potential for stress to emerge. Hannah, et al. (2008) noted the contributions of leadership efficacy to deeper understanding of needed leadership development and processes.

The complexity of leadership in the midst of global and local challenges demands both context specific and broad application skills to be consistently developed and refined in communities and organizations; such factors and opportunities impact a leader’s decision to lead change within a specific context (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Bandura, 1998). Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang, and Shi (2005) expanded the thought of self-efficacy influence from activity choice to its potential impact on overall performance outcomes. A strong sense of efficacy is required to apply one’s skills to their fullest and remain focused on the tasks at hand when faced with the challenges of global issues, cultural differences, and difficult circumstances for implementing change initiatives (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Additional research explored the gender implications within global leadership self-efficacy (Javadin, Bullough, & Dibble, 2016), various sources of self-efficacy in teaching (Phan & Locke, 2015), and other
contextually specific measures of self-efficacy (Bang & Reio, 2017; McCann & Kowalski, 2015; Reichard, Walker, Putter, Middleton, & Johnson, 2017).

**Leadership Development**

Leader development is defined as, “the expansion of the capacity of individuals to be effective in leadership roles and processes” (Day & Dragoni, 2015, p. 134). Leadership self-efficacy, along with self-awareness, leader identity, and relevant skills and competencies were identified as potential developmental indicators (Day & Dragoni, 2015). “The phenomenon of leadership development is complex and has implications at the individual, dyadic, team, and organizational levels of analysis, as well as longitudinally” (Day & Dragoni, 2015, p. 149). The researchers noted that for the construct of leadership self-efficacy to progress within leadership development, the construct needs to have stronger agreement in how it is conceptualized and measured (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

Reichard, Walker, Putter, Middleton, and Johnson (2017) conducted the first empirical studies on the construct of leader developmental efficacy through a cross-sectional and quasi-longitudinal survey. Three studies regarding leader developmental efficacy were represented within this article; study one reflected the intent to engage in leader self-development activities, study two examined the relationship between leader developmental efficacy and past leader development, and study three explored the influence of leader developmental efficacy on meaningful changes during a leader development program. Study one demonstrated LDE predicted the intent to engage in leader development, while study two showed the influence of past development experiences on LDE. Study three indicated growth in LDE following an intervention or training program. The researchers noted, “Gains in leader efficacy do not necessarily
indicate gains in leadership ability. Some leaders may feel more capable without gaining any demonstrable capabilities” (p. 151). Additional considerations of organizational context and barriers to leader development were recommended; however, the researchers implored, “leaders must continue to develop in order to tackle the complex problem facing their organizations” (p. 152).

Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) also provided an in-depth study of previous research on the broader topic of leader and leadership development, specifically the previous 25 years within The Leadership Quarterly. Day, et al. (2014) summarized their findings, “leadership development represents a dynamic process involving multiple interactions that persist over time…It involves the development and application of a variety of skills and is shaped by factors such as personality and relationships with others” (p. 78-79). Leadership is a common interest for organizations, and leadership development is more about effectiveness and efficiency than any particular model (Day, et al., 2014). “As such, this is an important areas of scholarly research and application with a myriad unanswered questions to pursue” (p. 79).

Dragoni, Park, Soltis, and Forte-Trammell (2014) explored cognitive and behavioral leadership development areas of leaders experiencing a job transition, specifically how a supervisor’s support impacts the transition process. “Research focused on how to support leaders during a job transition offers a more exacting description of and rationale for the support needed in this particular job context” (Dragoni, et al., 2014, p. 66). The study focused on a large, global technology firm where data was collected from a sample of 110 first-line manager at four markers throughout a 10-month training program. Participants were measured in the following
areas: self-perceived role knowledge, allocation of time spent leading, supervisor support in modeling effective leadership, supervisor support in providing job information, and experience with an effective leader. Additionally, job tenure, company tenure, learning goal orientation, leaders’ self-efficacy, emotional stability, job similarity, interaction frequency, relationship tenure, and the market were utilized as control variables. A relevant finding emphasized the positive impact of supervisors modeling effective leadership behaviors and providing needed job information on transitioning leaders’ ability to acquire self-perceived role knowledge more quickly. Dragoni, et al. (2014) call for additional exploration to encapsulate a broader view of leader development needs longitudinally to capture the emergence of aspects more apt to reveal in later stages of development, such as competence, efficacy, and leader identity.

Petridou, Nicolaidou, and Karagriorgi (2017) explored the impact of professional development and professional practice on school leaders’ self-efficacy through a quasi-experimental study. This study focused on the National In-Service Training Programme for Novice School Leaders in Cyprus; 130 out of 170 (76%) participants completed the pretest and posttest School Leaders’ Self-Efficacy Scale questionnaires. Results indicated a significant difference in measures between the two groups of participants; implications of these findings call for future reformatting of the professional development programmes. However, additional research is needed to demonstrate a stronger link between professional development opportunities and self-efficacy development.

Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) more extensively explored the influence of self-efficacy on leader development through previous research. “Despite the potentially
important role of self-efficacy beliefs in the leader development process, however, there is no well-developed theory or model explaining the process through which such beliefs influences development” (p. 459). Thus, the researchers drew upon existing self-efficacy studies to conceptualize this potential role and noted the complexity of its role beyond what other researchers have postulated. Four concepts were explored in this study: preparatory self-efficacy, efficacy spirals, learning self-efficacy, and resilient self-efficacy. Additionally, two factors were reviewed as key influences of self-efficacy: developmental experiences (feedback, challenge, and support), and learning orientation. "Findings from the subsequent research that is informed by the framework provided in this article should encourage practices that more effectively balance the needs for leaders to perform in the short term with the imperative that they learn and are adaptive in the longer term” (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2015, p. 467).

Leadership development is a complex concept with impact on several individual and interactive levels of an organization (Day & Dragoni, 2015). As a construct, leadership development efficacy needs further research to determine means of translating efficacy to action (Reichard, et al., 2017). The effectiveness and efficiency of leadership development merit many unanswered questions for research to establish various best practices (Day, et al., 2014). Additional research is needed within specific contexts to observe the contextual applications of best practices for leadership development (Dragoni, et al., 2014; Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011; Petridou, et al., 2017).
Relevant Competencies for Organizational Leadership in International Agricultural Development

“Leadership efficacy is a specific form of efficacy associated with the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with leading others” (Hannah, et al., 2008, p. 669). The typical conception of efficacy as state of mind or being opens the line of influence for its development and impact through the context and culture of a leader and organization (Walumbwa, et al., 2005). While needed competencies for individual leaders and organizations vary greatly, general competencies have been identified from a broader perspective of application to international agricultural development. Needed competencies for doctoral-level studies in international agricultural and extension education (Shinn, Wingenbach, Briers, Lindner, & Baker, 2009), as well as entry-level international agricultural development workers (Conner, Roberts, & Harder, 2013) have been explored. However, limited research exists regarding the general skills and competencies needed for leading organizations engaged in international agricultural development work.

Conner, et al. (2013) utilized a modified Delphi method to determine various competencies and experiences entry level practitioners need to be successful in the international agricultural development field. An expert panel was formed, which included representatives from academic institutions, non-government organizations, and government organizations through snowball sampling. The researchers concluded the study with 26 competencies and seven experiences identified as important for international agricultural development entry-level workers to possess upon entry to the profession. Results from this study implied competencies to be used in planning programming and curriculum purposed with developing agricultural extension
educators. Among the competencies, explaining global agricultural development issues, explaining how natural resource management affects agricultural development, and discussing how socio-cultural issues affect agricultural development rose to the top of the list, while work within a different cultural setting, completing a field experience in a developing country, and completing a development course rose to the top of agreed experiences for international agricultural development workers. Conner, et al. (2013) concluded that future research is needed to explore the extent that the identified competencies and experiences are being addressed in various training and development practices within the field of international agricultural development.

Shinn, Wingenbach, Briers, Lindner, and Baker (2009) explored the essential knowledge objects for doctoral-level professionals in international agricultural and extension education. A Delphi study included 13 international scholars that engaged in three rounds of research questions; round one had panelists identify content for doctoral-level international agricultural and extension programs, round two sought consensus on the identified knowledge objects, and round three sorted the knowledge objects into domains. The scholars identified 126 knowledge objects and 12 knowledge domains, including: agricultural/rural development, agricultural/biophysical systems, change and technology adoption, delivery strategies, human resource development, instructional design/curriculum development, learning theory, organizational development, philosophy, history, and policy, planning, needs assessment, and evaluation, research methods and tools, and scholarship and communications. Shinn, et al. (2009) concluded that these knowledge objects and domains have implications for
content development and professional development agricultural and extension education.

**Intercultural competence**

The concept of intercultural competence has been defined in multiple contexts and researched for well over 20 years without consensus among scholars and practitioners regarding its definition and assessment tools. Deardorff (2004) embarked upon a Delphi study to build consensus toward a definition and means of assessment of intercultural competence. Specifically, Deardorff (2004) engaged higher education administrators and leading experts of intercultural competence, both of which preferred more generalized definitions of the concept. Her conclusions emphasized that, “intercultural competence is a complex construct that involves more than one component,” with recommended assessment tools of qualitative nature (Deardorff, 2004, p. 203). Deardorff (2004) also concluded through her dissertation work that defining and identifying tools for assessment of intercultural competence is an ever-changing process, reflective of current developments and progress in internationalization efforts. Also noted in Deardorff’s (2004) work was the need for various experiences and opportunities to develop intercultural competence, as basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes must be processed to transfer to application and action for appropriate behaviors in intercultural settings.

Barrett (2012) emphasized the learning process of developing intercultural competence through learning, practice, and maintenance. Through a synthesis of research on intercultural competence, Barrett (2012) identified the following elements of intercultural competence:
• Attitudes: respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgement; willingness to tolerate ambiguity; and valuing cultural diversity.

• Skills: skills of listening to people from other cultures; skills of interacting with people from other cultures; skills of adapting to other cultural environments; linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse skills, including skills in managing breakdowns in communication; skills in mediating intercultural exchanges; skills in discovering information about other cultures; skills of interpreting cultures and relating cultures to one another; empathy; multiperspectivity; cognitive flexibility; and skills in critically evaluating cultural perspectives, practices and products, including those of one’s own culture.

• Knowledge: cultural self-awareness; communicative awareness, especially of the different linguistic and communicative conventions within different cultures; culture specific knowledge, especially knowledge of the perspectives, practices and products of particular cultural groups; and general cultural knowledge, especially knowledge of processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction.

• Behaviors: behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately during intercultural encounters; flexibility in cultural behavior; flexibility in communicative behavior; and having an action orientation, that is, a disposition for action in society in order to enhance the common good, especially through the reduction of prejudice, discrimination and conflict. (p.25)

Yet, Barrett (2012) stated that the connection between these identified knowledge, attitude, skills, and aspiration/behavior (KASA) elements and the development of intercultural competence development has not yet been established.

Ambayec (2011) explored the intercultural communication competence of international non-governmental organization (INGO) leaders through a survey and interview process. This study included 46 INGO leaders who completed the survey and 10 INGO leaders who also completed an interview; thus, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was used. The quantitative measurement was a demographic questionnaire with Chen and Starosta’s (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, which
included 24 items focused on interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness. The qualitative data drew from semi-structured interviews that brought insights related to INGO leaders’ experiences outside of international development, field and office work, definitions of success in INGOs, and advice for INGO leaders. This dual methodology enabled an understanding of the important role of intercultural sensitivity and communication competence to leadership and international development (Ambayec, 2011). “This study revealed that leaders are aware of how interacting with and learning to understand new cultures is invaluable to their work” (Ambayec, 2011, p. 61). Various aspects of an individual’s life – education, religion, and familial experiences – contribute to an individual’s leadership in intercultural situations (Ambayec, 2011). Insights from Ambayec’s (2011) study showed that, “it is intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence, because of and despite differences, that is necessary to making leadership work” (p. 62).

Graham, Turk, McDermott, and Brown (2013) provided commentary regarding the preparation of veterinarians for work in international development settings. While understanding of the role of livestock to food security (“lifestock”) and the framework of health agencies in a country was emphasized, the third element stressed was intercultural competence to ensure sustainable efforts in development work (Graham, et al., 2013). Working within implicit cultural values and thought patterns challenges a development workers’ own behaviors and judgements stemming from individual cultural mindsets. Knowing one’s own cultural values, however, is imperative to openly understanding the host country’s cultural value system to enable programmatic success.
in international development work (Graham, et al., 2013). Graham, et al. (2013) also encouraged collaboration with existing programs and local veterinarians to improve the sustainability of animal health development work around the world.

Chang (2009) embarked upon a qualitative study of 22 Taiwanese expatriate workers in international development projects to analyze the schema adjustment to a new culture. International development workers who commit to projects related to medical assistance, agricultural development, community development, (etc.) are faced with cross-cultural challenges that require a level of intercultural competence to adjust and succeed in such environments (Chang, 2009). “The interview questions included their preparation for working abroad, challenges in their international lives, strategies and learning processes for adaptation, as well as perspective change after cross-cultural encounters” (Chang, 2009, p. 61). Additionally, the researcher observed the study participants for 4-days on a service project in Vietnam to add contextual understanding to the study (Chang, 2009). To some degree, all participants indicated a change in schema from their cross-cultural experiences; this was reflected through the challenging mental tension from their new environments and various tactics for adapting into a new culture (Chang, 2009). Culture shocks that both heightened awareness of personal cultural schemas and created this mental tension enabled an openness in the process to gather perspectives from key cultural leaders for guidance in important schematic perspectives to that area of development, as well as clearer communication (Chang, 2009). Chang (2009) concluded that, “sojourners’ experience of difficulties, challenges, or failure should be collected as important resources and materials for cross-cultural learning” (p. 66).
The field of intercultural competence studies has also merited a depth of growing research regarding the development of intercultural competence in college students as future global leaders in an interconnected society (Deardorff, 2011; Irving, 2010; Martinez, 2012; Roy, 2006; Sample, 2013). Within this context, Deardorff (2011) emphasized that various aspects of educational efforts would benefit from intentional articulation of learning within the framework of intercultural competence. “Given that intercultural competence manifests differently depending on the discipline, it becomes important for academic departments to engage in reflection and collaboration” to develop transformational learning experiences that can effectively be assessed and maximized for student development to meet today’s competency needs (Deardorff, 2011, p. 69). “The extent to which it is possible to live one’s life without needing to recognize and adapt to the cultural differences of neighbors, friends, colleagues, and even family has rapidly diminished in the last few decades” (Sample, 2013, p. 554-555). Roy (2006) echoed that people living in foreign cultures often face situations where current perspectives are tested or stretched and new approaches must be developed to catalog new experiences and adapt to cultural nuances and traditions.

**Technical competence**

“Agriculture is the production and marketing of food to consumers; it necessarily includes the primary processing of crops to enable them to be cooked, preserved or immediately eaten by consumers” (Runge, 2015, p. 534). This basic definition of agriculture served as a premise for Runge (2015) to underscore this industry as an integrated solution for the relief of many poverty causes. He noted the connection of economic growth to significant growth in agriculture. “The sensible view of sustainable agriculture is that it is not about different versions of agricultural development but rather
it is a quiver containing several arrows, each of which can be helpful in improving the lot of man and the environment; not all solutions will be applicable in all cases" (Runge, 2015, p. 536). Runge (2015) discussed the UK Department of International Development’s (DfID) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which includes human resources, social resources, natural resources, physical capital, and financial capital as types of resources for addressing the complexity of agricultural systems. Runge (2015) emphasized that tackling issues of poverty includes an understanding of the complex, technical systems of agriculture.

Brière, Proulx, Flores, and Laporte (2015) conducted an exploratory study to identify competencies of non-government organization project managers in international development work. “The achievement of international development projects has become a specific job which now requires specific competencies such as technical skills, management skills, and human skills” (Brière, et al., 2015, p. 116). Brière, et al. (2015) noted that while previous research in various contexts of private sector project management existed, minimal research addressed such project management work in the NGO context. In Brière, et al. (2015), 28 NGO project managers were interviewed concerning their experience in NGO project management, perceived competencies needed in this role, application of these competencies, and characteristics and criteria for success of NGO projects. Results of this study indicated eleven competencies for project management: adaptability, span of abilities, management skills, communication, personal qualities, interpersonal skills, leadership, ethics, networking and local knowledge, capacity building, and change management. This study showed “the link between the environment–characterized by complex relationships between numerous
stakeholders—and a customized approach to various contexts” (Brière, et al., 2015, p. 124).

International agriculture development through agricultural extension systems is a key contextual understanding for leaders in this field, as addressed by Abo, Fademi, Olaniyan, Ochigbo, Fatoba, and Misari (2002) contextually in Nigeria. The article connected the historical evolution of agricultural development within the country and highlighted the important role of extension in the training and introduction of new agricultural technologies in the developing nation (Abo, et al., 2002). Specific changes to training and technology through agricultural development projects were connected through resource persons - including university and NGO personnel that are subject matter specialists—that can simply communicate solutions and strategies for adoption (Abo, et al., 2002). Abo, et al. (2002) concluded, “the [T&V] system has brought improved communication between extension staff, farmers and researchers towards sustainable agricultural development . . . there is no doubt that we need enduring institutional linkage on a permanent and sustainable level in research-extension-farmer input linkage systems” (p. 78).

“The goals for sustainable development in rural Kenya include achieving food security, raised incomes, a clean environment, and reduced poverty. To achieve these goals, local communities need assistance to change from an attitude of dependency in order to create a greater sense of dignity and self-worth” (Njine, 2014, p. 68). Agriculture training centers (ATCs) provide a means for disseminating technical knowledge regarding agricultural technology and information and serve as change agents in Kenyan communities (Njine, 2014). “Partnerships allow various teams to
come together to address complex and difficult issues that no single organization or person can handle on their own" (Njine, 2014, p. 69). This study explored the impact of an ATC towards sustainable development in Nyeri County through the use of two structured questionnaires with 22 extension agents and 22 farmers. Njine (2014) concluded that ATCs function in multiple roles, including technology training and agricultural knowledge; however, additional opportunities for funding and collaboration with private or public sectors should be explored for sustainable development. As Rockwell and Bennett (2004) noted, “Collaborative advantage is achieved when something unusually creative is produced—perhaps an objective is met—that no single organization could have produced and when each organization is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone” (p. 14).

While technical competence within international agricultural development concerns much about agriculture and sustainable development, the contextual connection to executive leadership roles also merits consideration of technical competence relevant for such a position. Sherlock and Nathan (2007) explored the contexts of learning for nonprofit association CEOs. In their phenomenological study, a sample of twelve national membership association CEOs comprised the purposive selection with the parameters of years as CEO being two to seven. Three in-depth interviews focused on the participants’ past learning experience leading to their CEO role, reflections on current learning experiences as CEO, and a reflection on the meaning of their learning experiences. Five themes emerged from the data related to nonprofit association CEO learning: learning about the CEO’s relationships with the board, learning about the CEO’s relationships with staff, learning about the self as CEO,
reflection became more important for learning, and learning how to perform in the CEO role. “While books, seminars, and networking can occasionally be helpful in the learning process to CEOs, trial and error with real experience is where the learning predominantly occurs” (Sherlock & Nathan, 2007, p. 27). Recommendations included executive coaching, programming with focused reflection, and an executive development program; additional research to better understand the dynamics of CEO learning and development would benefit both scholars and practitioners.

Suarez (2010) expressed concern of the rising challenge of a leadership gap in the nonprofit sector, an inquired of where leaders will come from to fill the gap. This line of research inquiry, thus, explored the various backgrounds of current executive leaders in the sector. Suarez (2010) noted:

If credibility for leadership is based increasingly on margins and business expertise, then management credentials and management experience should become widespread among leaders in the sector. By contrast, if substantive expertise and nonprofit experience are essential for leadership in the sector, then leaders within these backgrounds should remain. (p. 699)

Suarez (2010) sampled 501(c)(3) organizations from the 10-county San Francisco Bay Area; 200 organizations agreed to participate (76% response rate) in face-to-face interviews to learn about their careers. Findings indicated that 51% of leaders held advanced credentials, with only 13% of those advanced credentials representing management related credentials. Researchers presented a typology of nonprofit leaders into four ideal types consistent with the findings of the study: the professional administrator, the social entrepreneur, the substantive expert, and the nonprofit lifer, Greater research within nonprofits to determine what experiences best serve the leaders as they take on a specific role.
Executive leadership within international agricultural development organizations requires a combination of competencies encompassing intercultural, as well as the technical agricultural and organizational aspects of the position. While other levels of needed competencies have been explored (Brière, et al., 2015; Conner, Roberts, & Harder, 2013; Shinn, et al., 2009), the executive level remains uncharted territory within this specific context. While intercultural competence is recognized as an invaluable area for international NGO leaders (Ambayac, 2011), there is a lack of linkage between KASAs to the overall development of competence (Barrett, 2012). Agricultural systems understanding is beneficial to development work (Runge, 2015), but a customized approach to the technical knowledge needed for a specific organization may be most appropriate for a leader (Abo, et al., 2002; Brière, et al., 2015). Organizational technical elements are also valued for leadership development progress (Sherlock & Nathan, 2007). Relevant competencies are essential to address the rising leadership gap (Suarez, 2007).

**Mentoring**

Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, and Avolio (2011) explored the impact of mentorship in leader development. “Indeed, the assumption that having a good mentor is essential to one’s career success as a leader is ubiquitous in career counseling, yet there is little empirical evidence to justify this assumption” (Lester, et al., 2011, p. 409). “We suggest that leader efficacy is a critical component in leader development, and moreover an aspect of leadership that can be effectively developed in the mentor-protégé relationship” (p. 411). A framework for mentorship in leader efficacy development was explored through a six-month mentorship program for military officers and cadets. Measures included feedback orientation, trust, leadership efficacy, and
performance; six control variables for this study included pre-test levels of leader efficacy, age, gender, ethnicity, prior military service, and motivation to lead. Results demonstrated that a mentorship intervention produced significant positive relationships between leader efficacy development with age ($t(171) = 2.17, p,.05$) and motivation to lead ($t(171) = 2.12, p,.05$) (Lester, et al., 2011, p. 422-423). The researchers call for additional research to expand the context beyond the military and to a broader range of ages to verify the impact of a mentoring program on leader development.

Bang and Reio (2017) sampled 278 working adults at a large southeastern university in the United States as undergraduate and graduate students, for which the researchers explored the mediating role of creative self-efficacy and workplace effect on elements of personal accomplishment, creative work involvement, and mentoring toward creative work involvement. Findings indicated a direct association of personal accomplishment and mentoring to creative self-efficacy. Creative efficaciousness was a direct link to creative work involvement. Additional research was recommended into the nature of creative work environments and creative behaviors at work.

Siebert, Sargent, Kraimer, and Kiazzad (2017) examined the mediating role of leadership self-efficacy and a mentor network toward leader effectiveness through development experiences. First-line retail managers were surveyed for this study, as well as their respective supervisors to create research dyads ($n=235$). Measures included participation in formal development programs, job challenges, developmental supervision, leadership self-efficacy, mentor network, leadership effectiveness, and promotability; control variables included motivation to lead and high potential program participant. Pertinent results indicated a mediating impact of self-efficacy toward
developmental job challenges and formal development programs, as well as acting as a motivational mechanism. “Leadership self-efficacy is a construct that has taken on growing importance in the literature . . . it is an important mechanism in the leadership development process linked to specific development experiences” (Siebert, et al., 2017, p. 384). Future research was encouraged for linking social cognitive functions to leadership development and leadership self-efficacy.

Though in a specific, military context, Lester, et al. (2011) proposed future research to further explore the potential impact of mentoring on leadership efficacy, as well as the role of leader efficacy in leader development. Mentoring also served as an encouragement for creative expression and approaches to work (Band & Reio, 2017). Siebert, et al. (2017) also explored the role of a mentor network through leadership self-efficacy development in job challenges within professional dyads of retail managers and supervisors. These contextual applications offer potential means of exploration within international agricultural development regarding the specific role of mentoring as a mediating factor of leader efficacy and leader development.

**Non-Government Organization Challenges**

A growing challenge within NGO leadership is the concern regarding the leadership gap and the development of a new generation of leaders in this field (Hailey, 2006). It is understood that, “Executive leadership is a critical component in the success of nonprofit organizations” (Froelich, McKee, & Rathge, 2011, p. 3). Hailey (2006) further emphasized, “NGO leaders clearly respond in different ways, but one common aspect is the way that they combine their idealism with hard analysis, technical expertise, and professionalism – while at the same time being able to communicate a vision and motivate a range of staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries” (p. 16). Froelich, et al. (2011)
discussed that understanding the unique combination of personal characteristics that executive leaders embody, including charisma, motivation, and effective management of resources, will be key to succession planning. The following four studies added depth to the field in response to *The Nonprofit Sector's Leadership Deficit* (Tierney, 2006) report conducted through The Bridgespan Group, which emphasized the nonprofit sector would need nearly 80,000 new leaders by 2016 to fill positions across new organizations, retiring leaders, leadership transitions, and the expansion of leadership teams, or similar statistics identifying the leadership need.

Carman, et al. (2010) addressed the context of human capital development in nonprofit organizations specifically within Charlotte, North Carolina. The researchers utilized a survey developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation regarding executive leader career paths, succession planning, and other demographic data to inquire of the 299 nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status. Email surveys were sent to 237 nonprofit organizations, with a resulting 46% response rate. Carman, et al. (2010) found that 69% expected to move on from their current position within the next five years, yet only 15% reported great concern about executive turnover and only 23% indicated having succession plans within their organization. One noteworthy finding compared organizations with succession plans to those without; no significant differences were found in demographics or level of concern for an impending transition (Carman, et al., 2010). Carman, et al. (2010) concluded that organizations would behoove themselves to enact a succession plan to tackle the challenges ahead.

Froelich, et al. (2011) focused on executive directors of 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 organizations to explore succession planning practices. The researchers utilized a
survey that addressed various aspects of succession planning, board roles, and executive tenure factors. Executive directors of 800 charitable organizations and 859 cooperatives in two states received the survey; a systematic random sample of 106 usable responses from charitable organizations and 160 usable responses from cooperative organizations were utilized for analysis in this study (Froelich, et al., 2011). Findings indicated that the top two reasons for engaging in succession planning work were for continuity of business activity and improve or maintain financial performance. Additionally, Froelich, et al. (2011) found that just over 60% of those studied did not believe a viable internal candidate for their position existed. Efforts toward leadership development for potential internal candidates were mediocre across the list of potential activities (i.e. mentoring, professional development, and annual performance evaluations for key people). Thus, a key finding of this research reflected the mismatch of planning and preparation for succession to the concern for such transitions (Froelich, et al., 2011).

Bozer, et al. (2015) explored the organizational leadership development initiatives within succession planning of nonprofit organizations. This research utilized a survey of 54 nonprofit Israeli executive directors via the Global Survey of Executive Succession (GSES) in Nonprofit Organizations, which was translated into Hebrew (Bozer, et al., 2011); measures included demographics, succession planning indicators, availability of leadership development programs, and the importance of leadership development. Findings indicate the need for the board to recognize their responsibility and role in supporting active leadership development and succession planning practices with the executive director (Bozer, et al., 2015).
Santora, et al. (2015) comparatively analyzed articles from six countries that addressed executive succession planning; countries included in the study were Australia, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Russia, and the United States and were selected based upon representative differences of cultural values. Each of the studies analyzed utilized the Global Survey of Executive Succession (GSES) in Nonprofit Organizations survey and ranged in sample sizes (Santora, et al., 2015). Findings indicated that succession planning is not a core activity for nonprofit organizations and that organizations tend to look outside of the organization, even when a second-in-command position exists (Santora, et al, 2015). Finally, Santora, et al. (2015) emphasized stronger connection of succession planning to strategy to not only “ensure seamless succession outcomes, but also enhance the sustainability of organizations by perpetuating and improving the cultures of those organizations” (p. 80).

While a leadership gap exists and presents the potential for crisis if not addressed fervently, opportunity looms with regard to redefining how the nonprofit/NGO sectors address leadership development throughout all levels of organizations (Carman, Leland, & Wilson, 2010). “Finding qualified, motivated leaders to fill all the vital executive positions vacated by this generation is going to present pressing challenges for many organizations, nonprofit and for-profit alike” (Froelich, et al., 2011, p. 4). Mindfulness of the gap in leadership and emphasis on succession planning can aid organizations in viewing various opportunities in a positive light even in spite of the challenges to face (Froelich, et al., 2011). Hailey and James (2004) echo, “One of the crucial attributes of NGO leadership is the ability to balance such competing pressures, yet maintain a personal integrity based on personal values and deep-rooted contacts
with community within which they work” (p. 349). In light of the important and dynamic role executive leaders play in nonprofit/NGO organizations, executive succession planning seems to be more talk than action (Santora, Sarros, Bozer, Esposito, & Bassi, 2015). Bozer, Kuna, and Santora (2015) also noted, “Most nonprofits do not view leadership development as a strategic imperative that requires an investment in staff-development initiatives to narrow the existing gap between executive succession planning and the identification and possible selection of suitable internal successors” (p. 2). Though no difference was found between organizations with or without succession plans in regard to level of concern for a leadership transition, such a guiding document could enable a smooth transition when the time comes (Carman, et al., 2010; Santora, et al., 2015).

**Leadership Challenges in International Agricultural Development**

Hunger and poverty issues bring distinct leadership challenges to international agriculture development, coinciding with the realization that “food security remains a pressing issue with the estimated number of chronically malnourished people hovering around one billion” (Naylor, 2011, p. 233). Naylor (2011) emphasized the complexity of challenges faced through the effort to feed a rising world population, as well as establishing food security in some of the world’s most economically challenged regions. “It has also become evident that the multi-disciplinary field of agricultural development needs to expand to be relevant to the broader agenda” of food security and global development (Naylor, 2011, p. 247). McMichael and Schneider (2011) noted, reaching the targets for reducing hunger and increasing food security set in the development goals requires a major shift in development policy and strategy. Strong collaboration is needed across previously perceived barriers between various organizations to develop
innovative solutions to address these global issues of hunger and poverty (Caven, 2006; Corbett & Fikkert, 2012; Dethier & Effenburger, 2012; Feed the Future, 2014; Husnah, et al., 2014; Hoksbergen, 2014; Jones & Garforth, 1997; Sharma, et al., 2014).

Jamali (2003) integrated a case study on an agricultural development project in Lebanon to the discussion of NGO roles in development and their impacts within the community contexts. Jamali (2003) also analyzed the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of NGOs within the broader context of development work. “NGOs need to critically re-examine their roles and goals in a rapidly changing world and evaluate the operational and qualitative impact of their work as they assume a greater role in development work and assistance” (Jamali, 2003, p.3). Jamali (2003) concluded that NGOs hold the organizational strengths and competencies to make unique development contributions to communities.

Raney and Raveloharimisy (2016) explored the contributions of faith-based organizations to development work. “Interconnectedness is the new global norm. And, as we face challenges incomparable in magnitude to any previous age, many look to faith for developmental solutions” (p. 3). This case study analyzed one faith-based organization through qualitative and quantitative measures based upon a content analysis of core organizational materials and annual reports. Researchers identified the interplay of identity, resources, and opportunity to do good, of which in many ways are parallel in practice between secular and faith-based organizations. However, the lens in which the actions and decisions are taken varies with one’s faith. Raney and Raveloharimisy (2016) suggested the development of four proficiencies that intersect both types of organizations to aid in future collaborative efforts in development: religious
literacy, religious tolerance, religious competency, and development literacy. Future research on additional organizations is needed to determine exemplars within faith-based international development work and further clarify the unique influences on actions of faith-based organizations.

Clarke and Ware (2015) assessed how faith-based organizations (FBOs) are understood through a modified realist synthesis method, which is a form of systematic literature review. Eighty-five studies were identified and 50 selected for in-depth analysis. Six typologies were identified through this study to reflect the interaction of faith-based organizations and NGOs: intersection, distinct, substitutive, subset, coexisting, and atomistic grouping. Clarke and Ware (2015) presented a new, constitutive model or typology that reflects a number of players within development work and illustrates the interactive nature of FBOs with NGOs, communities, religious organizations, and civil society. “Clearly more work is required given the importance of FBOs in both development programmes in developing nations and also in advocacy in developed nations” (p. 46).

Kristjanson, Reid, Dickson, Clark, Romney, Puskur, MacMillan, and Grace (2009) focused on the knowledge-action gap between research and decision makers concerning hunger and poverty issues. Kristjanson, et al. (2009) utilized the Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability of the U.S. National Academics propositions (problem definition, program management, program organization, decision-support system, learning orientation, and continuity and flexibility) to evaluate five International Livestock Research Institute projects regarding the link of knowledge to action. The researchers concluded the propositions to be relevant and added a seventh
proposition addressing power and trust among project partners to enhance the effectiveness of these international development projects.

"It is evident, then, that practitioners, policy-makers, and politicians should understand and explore the ways that faith interacts with development, specifically in the work of faith-based organizations" (Raney & Raveloharimisy, 2016). Faith-based organizations are visible contributors within international development, and their engagement throughout history continues to become more understood (Clarke & Ware, 2015). Understanding various organizational roles also beckons the need for stronger communication to close the knowledge-action gap around hunger and poverty issues (Kristjanson, et al., 2009). Additionally, organizational leaders must evaluate their impact within specific community contexts to ensure sustainable development and meaningful contributions (Jamali, 2003). The challenges of organizational roles, interaction of faith-based and secular development work, and the need for communication across research and decision makers within development are pertinent issues faced by executive leaders within international agricultural development today.

**Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of lived leadership development experiences by executive non-government organizational leaders in international agricultural development. Chapter 2 first discussed the theoretical framework for this study, Bandura’s (1977; 1986) Social Cognitive Theory. Additional insight was gathered from McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership and Paglis and Green’s (2002) leadership self-efficacy model to frame the Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development. Literature and empirical studies relevant to the
conceptual framework were explored (Table 2-1). Finally, literature and empirical studies related to challenges in international agricultural development, the role of non-government organizations in international agricultural development, and leadership in non-government organizations were reviewed.
Figure 2-1. Bandura’s (1977; 1986) Model of Reciprocal Determinism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enactive efficacy information</th>
<th>Vicarious efficacy information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive biases</td>
<td>Model attribute similarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived task difficulty and diagnosticity</td>
<td>Model performance similarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effort expenditure</td>
<td>Model historical similarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of external aid received</td>
<td>Multiplicity and diversity modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational circumstances of performance</td>
<td>Mastery or coping strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporal pattern of successes and failures</td>
<td>Portayal of task demands</td>
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<td>Selective bias in self-monitoring of performance</td>
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<td>Selective bias in memory for performance attainments</td>
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<tr>
<th>Persuasory efficacy information</th>
<th>Somatic and affective efficacy information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Degree of attentional focus on somatic states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expertness</td>
<td>Interpretive biases regarding somatic states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Perceived source of affective arousal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree of appraisal disparity</td>
<td>Level of arousal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with task demands</td>
<td>Situational circumstances of arousal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 2-2. The distinctive sets of factors within each of the four modes of influence that can affect the construction of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1998, p. 55)
Figure 2-3. McCormick’s (2001) Social Cognitive Model of Leadership

Figure 2-4. McCormick’s (2001) Application of Bandura’s (1977; 1986) Model of Reciprocal Determinism
Figure 2-5. Paglis & Green's (2002) Leadership Self-Efficacy Model

Figure 2-6. Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development
Figure 2-7. Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development with Objectives Identified
<table>
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<th>Reference</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<td>Bandura (1997)</td>
<td>Mastery experiences, Social models, Verbal persuasion, Physiological and affective states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anderson &amp; Betz (2001)</td>
<td>Career Development: personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning or modeling, emotional arousal (anxiety), and social persuasion and encouragement</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chan &amp; Drasgow (2001)</td>
<td>Antecedents: General cognitive ability, personality, values, past leadership experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paglis &amp; Green (2002)</td>
<td>Individual antecedents: Successful experiences in leadership roles, internal locus of control, trait self-esteem</td>
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<td>Walumbwa, et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Enactive mastery, Modeling, Verbal persuasion, Physiological arousal in connection to transformational leadership</td>
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<td>Garmon (2007)</td>
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<td>Developmental experiences, Learning orientation</td>
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<td>Phan &amp; Locke (2015)</td>
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<td>McCann &amp; Kowalski (2015)</td>
<td>Mastery experiences, Vicarious experiences, Verbal persuasion, Physiological and affective states</td>
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<td>Javidan, et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy in a global context: Global mindset, intercultural empathy, diplomacy, passion for diversity, global business savvy, cosmopolitan outlook, and interpersonal impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reichard, et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Leader developmental efficacy, intentions to develop leadership, past leader development behaviors, quality of past leader development activities</td>
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CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of leadership development in international agricultural development through the lens of non-government organization (NGO) executive leaders. The research questions of this study were designed with the intent to gain an understanding of NGO executive leaders’ experience pertaining to leadership development practices and influences throughout their journey to executive organizational leadership in international agricultural development. Desired competencies for leading an organization within international agricultural development, as well as current leadership challenges faced in their executive leadership role were also explored. Chapter 2 presented Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory as the theoretical framework for this study and explored supporting literature from McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership and Paglis and Green’s (2002) leadership self-efficacy model to frame the Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development. Literature and empirical studies relevant to the elements of leader self-efficacy and relevant competencies within the conceptual model were explored to provide additional context. The chapter was concluded by literature and empirical studies related to challenges in international agricultural development, the role of non-government organizations in international agricultural development, and leadership in non-government organizations. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and design of this research study.
Research Design

Qualitative methodology was selected for this study to enable deeper understanding of a leader’s personal leadership development experiences, behavioral elements for effective leadership, and the current, broad environment within the context of international agricultural development. Creswell (2013) offered a rationale for the use of qualitative research for inquiries when exploring a particular context or a detailed understanding of a phenomenon: “Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 44). This methodology emphasizes the social construction of reality, as well as the various relational and environmental factors faced by organizational executive leaders (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Creswell (2013) noted, “The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information” (p.47). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) also noted:

Three interconnected, generic activities define the qualitative research process. They go by a variety of different labels, including theory, method, and analysis; or ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Behind these terms stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gendered, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multi-culturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology), which are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways. (p. 23)

The ontology, epistemology, and theoretical frame were explored, and methods were considered to reflect the purpose of this study.
Relativism

A relativist ontological lens enabled the researcher to view this study with an understanding that multiple constructed realities exist (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Crotty (2006) described this paradigm as:

What is said to be ‘the way things are’ is really just ‘the sense we make of them’. Once this standpoint is embraced, we will obviously hold our understandings much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically, seeing them as historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind. Historical and cross-cultural comparisons should make us very aware that, at different times and in different places, there have been and are very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena. (p. 64)

Smith and Hodkinson (2005) stressed, “relativism stands for nothing more or less than recognition of our human finitude” (p. 922). Relativistic recognition brings forth specific influences on a phenomenon from the cultural realities in which the phenomenon occurs (Crotty, 2006). The premise of international agricultural development assumes cross-cultural experiences, thus, an understanding of such cultural nuances and implications on leader and organizational function is needed in understanding a phenomenon.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted, “Relativism or uncertainty is the inevitable consequence of the fact that, as humans, we have finite knowledge of ourselves and the world in which we live” (p. 911). Crotty (2006), in bridging the ontological and epistemological lenses, expressed, “Social constructionism is at once realist and relativist” (p. 63).

Social Constructionism

Constructionism is a commonly found or claimed epistemology within social sciences (Crotty, 2006). Crotty defined constructionism as, “the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being
constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and
developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 2006, p. 42).
Based in a specific context, meaning is constructed from personal experience and the
world being discovered, which is qualitatively interpreted (Crotty, 2006). “We have to
reckon with the social origin of meaning and the social character with which it is
inevitably stamped” (Crotty, 2006, p.52). He also noted, “Our culture brings things into
view for us and endows them with meaning” (p. 54).

**Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is reflected through the invitation to engage with phenomena
and construct meaning directly (Crotty, 2006). This qualitative perspective works on the
premise of setting aside preconceived notions of a phenomenon, known as the
researcher’s epoche or bracketing, to view the data through immediate experience so
that meaning can be derived or enhanced (Crotty, 2006). Creswell (2013) described,
“The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a
phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (p. 76). “The emphasis typically
remains on common understandings of the meanings of common practices, so that
phenomenological research of this kind emerges as an exploration, via personal
experiences, or prevailing cultural understandings” (Crotty, 2006, p. 83). It is an
individual experience, in which each must explore the phenomenon to accurately
describe it. As a field that blends research and practice, leadership development aims to
support experiences that develop individuals toward efficacy in their respective
leadership environments, while creating replicable cultural understanding and broad,
positive impacts for this phenomena. Flood (2010) noted, “Phenomenological
knowledge reforms understanding and leads to more thoughtful action through
constructionism” (p. 8). Gray (2014) echoed, “Phenomenology becomes an exploration, via personal experience, of prevailing cultural understandings” (p. 24). A phenomenological perspective to this research allowed the researcher to explore experiences of leadership development in international agricultural development through the lens of executive leaders in non-governmental organizations, which offered a fresh insight into development practices, competencies needed, and potential challenges for international agricultural development leaders.

Flood (2010) further delineated phenomenological theoretical perspective into two approaches: descriptive and interpretive; these parallel Creswell’s (2013) delineation of transcendental and hermeneutical approaches. “These different philosophies inform the often incommensurable assumptions, objectives, and analytical steps of different phenomenological methodologies” (Gill, 2014, p. 4). Descriptive [transcendental] phenomenology encompasses Husserl’s (1970) philosophical ideas that universal essences have one correct interpretation of experiences and radical autonomy is not central to the experiential interpretations, meaning the impact of various cultural elements are not central to the theoretical perspective. Groenewald (2004) extrapolated Husserl’s perspective, “To arrive at certainty, anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness” (p. 43). In contrast, Flood (2010) highlighted Heidegger’s (1962) hermeneutic focus on the lived experience to look at a deeper level of meaning beneath the descriptive concepts and essences of a phenomenon. The focus on such lived experiences and their meanings leads a hermeneutic phenomenologist to seek out how these meanings impact various choices made
throughout their narrative (Flood, 2010). A key assumption of this hermeneutic phenomenological perspective is Heidegger’s belief that the researcher’s knowledge adds value to the comprehensive understanding of the topic of interest and can be blended with the participant’s perspectives to articulate meaning (co-constitutionality) (Flood, 2010). The transcendental/descriptive phenomenological approach was utilized in this study to minimize bias in describing leadership development experiences of executive organizational leaders and inquiry of common mediating practices toward leadership development within international agricultural development non-government organization executives.

Expounding upon a theoretical perspective enables the identification of various assumptions of a methodology, which is necessary to justify our viewpoint (Crotty, 1998). “Phenomenology suggests that, if we lay aside, as best we can, the prevailing understandings of those phenomena and revisit our immediate experience of them, possibilities for new meaning emerge for us or we witness at least an authentication and enhancement of former meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 78). He continued, “This line of thought presumes that there are ‘things themselves’ to visit in our experience, that is, objects to which our understandings relate. That there are indeed such objects is what the notion of intentionality proclaims and it lies at the heart of phenomenology” (Crotty, 1998, p. 79). Therefore, we must engage in the phenomena of our world to make sense of their complexities and develop common understandings for direct and relevant action (Crotty, 1998; Finlay, 2009). A key process action to suspend any preceding knowledge or experience of a phenomenon is referred to as bracketing (Creswell, 2007). While not a perfect process, bracketing reduces researcher bias by laying aside preconceived
notions related to the phenomenon to enable an immediate and articulate description of the lived experience (Clark, Kelsey, & Brown, 2014, p. 46).

Crotty (1998) identified two clear characteristics of phenomenology that emerge from the research:

First of all, it has a note of objectivity about it. It is in search of objects of experience rather than being content with a description of the experiencing subject. Second, it is an exercise in critique. It calls into question what we take for granted. (p. 82-83)

Crotty (1998) also noted, “The phenomenology of the phenomenological movement is a first-person exercise. Each of us must explore our own experience, not the experience of others, for no one can take that step ‘back to the things themselves’ on our behalf” (p. 84). Gray (2014) noted four aspects of phenomenological research:

- Emphasizes inductive logic.
- Seeks the opinions and subjective accounts and interpretations of participants.
- Relies on qualitative analysis of data.
- Is not so much concerned with generalizations to larger populations, but with contextual description and analysis. (p. 30).

Giorgi (1994) reflected on the appeal of phenomenology’s comprehensive approach that begins at a consciousness level of perspective and spurs research from that point of legitimate recognition. Francis, Breland, Ostergaard, Lieblan, and Morse (2013) also reflected, “Our lived experience provides the basic starting point for exploring the spaces between the theoretical disciplines” (p. 66). Regardless of descriptive or interpretive perspective, the essence of the phenomenological perspective is to gain deeper understanding of a phenomenon and focus on the commonalities between participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2007; Henry, Morris, & Talbert, 2014; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990).
As a researcher of leadership in international agricultural development, I included a subjectivity statement to frame the influences and experiences from my life that have impacted my perspective of leadership development and international agricultural development. Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) emphasized, “Although you should be interested, perhaps even passionate, about your topic, you must not be so emotionally involved that your own biases prevent you from adequate interpretation of the findings” (p. 587). Gearing (2004) described the focus of reflexive bracketing within phenomenological research as, “to make transparent, overt, and apparent the researcher’s personal values, background, and cultural suppositions” (p. 1445). Creswell (2013) also emphasized the consideration of personal background and interests in research.

Rural life has marked the majority of my life experience and will continue to impact my engagement in agriculture for years to come. Growing up in a small, rural town in central Illinois instilled a great desire for community in me, as well as a deep respect for agriculture. From an early age, I had a tendency to be the organizer of the group; from keeping notes and nickel ‘dues’ in a cigar box for our neighborhood kid club with meetings under the gingko tree to officer roles in any organization I was a part of since then, leading by serving was simply a part of me. My familial upbringing in a conservative, Christian home established a core foundation of Biblical values that continue to influence my worldview. Through various agricultural youth organizations and collegiate pursuits leadership development has influenced my beliefs in developing and serving others. Various formal and informal programs deepened my knowledge and
appreciation of leadership, as well as provided opportunities to practice and teach leadership. I hold a deep value and positive view of leadership development.

Although growing up I knew of family friends who served as missionaries in Zimbabwe and the Philippines, my first international experience did not come until I was a sophomore in college. A short-term study abroad tour to England, Belgium, and France opened my eyes to the ever-present role of agriculture around the world. As we traveled from battlefield to battlefield, I was humbled to walk in the trenches where historical battles were fought to keep freedom a marker of our country. In the midst of such somber inspiration and appreciation, I found myself staring out the bus windows as we traveled—enthralled by the different agricultural landscapes. “International” became an integral component to my vocabulary alongside my passion for leadership development as I sought additional opportunities to travel abroad and learn more about agriculture and leadership in various cultural contexts.

Graduate school and involvement in the International Leadership Association would provide such opportunities to increase my depth of knowledge of leadership development, international agriculture, and leadership within various cultures. Through these venues, I also gained academic mentors who guided my leadership development as a researcher and practitioner of leadership education. As I began my professional career at the University of Florida, additional opportunities were presented through an international service and leadership experience required for the program I coordinated. Each year, I traveled with 10-15 students to an international destination to immerse into a new culture for 10-12 days, including agricultural practices, service, and personal leadership experiences. Over the past five years, the agricultural and service
components have evolved to be a rural community immersion experience for nearly half of the trip. Personally experiencing the challenges and joys of sustained community tradition and culture has inspired my interest in agricultural development. Observing the responses of my students to the community immersion experience and its subsequent impact on their leadership development also inspired my connection of leadership to international agricultural development. Also, I have incorporated the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals into the curriculum of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Leadership Institute to broaden the perspective of the students regarding international issues prior to and following this international travel experience.

As my experiences broadened through my professional responsibilities, I also had the opportunity to go on my first international mission trip in 2012. Through my missions experiences, I have gained personal and spiritual mentors that have positively impacted my leadership development and greatly complimented other mentors in the academic setting. Missions engagement opened a new connection of leadership development beyond academia to parallel spiritual development and apply within agricultural development. Leading missions teams also presented opportunities for personal leadership development within cross-cultural settings.

Witnessing the depths of poverty in various areas around the world has infiltrated my mind regarding the role of agriculture in meeting the most basic needs of people in developing areas, as well as leadership development to ensure sustainable development within communities. For many in developing countries, agriculture is all they have; yet, their traditions and other cultural beliefs often create a barrier to agricultural technologies that could help sustain communities is adopted. To see fishing
nets made out of mosquito nets intended to protect them from potential disease brought about questions that were met with simple answers reflecting resource use for immediate needs. It was clear to me as we motored through a fishing village with children holding out their hands for anything we would give them that resource based solutions must be connected to community leadership development; and, leaders of organizations providing aid to these developing countries must have the confidence to tackle these enormous needs with the cultural understanding to truly help create sustainable change and not ultimately hurt a community through creating dependency. Thus, leadership development within international agriculture development has become a passion and added purpose to my work in leadership studies. My interests lie in the effectiveness of international agricultural development organizations serving around the world in some of the hardest locations and both the needs and practices surrounding leadership and leadership development for sustained impact. Competencies for entry-level agricultural development work and qualities of a program manager within international development work have been explored in the literature; however, limited research has explored the phenomenon of leadership development and leader self-efficacy within international agricultural development.

**Methodology**

**Characteristics of Phenomenological Methods**

Phenomenology is characterized by emphasis on a particular phenomenon, explored within a group of 3-15 people, with focus on lived experiences and the researcher previously identifying and setting aside experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) posited data saturation for a phenomenological study is reached at twelve interviews, yet noted that 94% of high
frequency codes were identified in the first six interviews. Similar research studies of executive-level leaders also reached saturation at 10-12 participants (Melancon, 2016; Nyukorong & Quisenberry, 2016; Sherlock & Nathan, 2007). “The key questions involve exploring what has been experienced in terms of the phenomenon and what contexts affected or influenced those experienced” (Ary, et al., 2010, p. 472). Phenomenology brings a richer understanding of an experience, which has otherwise been simply conceptualized and exemplified (Crotty, 2006). Phenomenology is distinguished from other qualitative methods by its focus on the nature of the meaning of a phenomenon through the structure of the experience as the central line of inquiry (Ary, et al., 2010). Creswell (2013) described this essence as “the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (p.79).

Participants in phenomenological research are selected due to their experience of the phenomenon of interest and are able to provide insight through the distinct individual, unstructured interview method of data collection (Ary, et al., 2010). A researcher may bracket his or her individual experiences with the phenomenon prior to the interview process with participants. This enables a fresh perspective in skillfully approaching the interview, prepared to listen, prompt, and encourage others to detail their experience with the phenomenon (Ary, et al., 2010; Creswell, 2013). Data analysis in a phenomenological study typically includes a variety of descriptions: horizontalization (identifying significant statements), textual (focus on the experience), structural (focus on contexts of influence), and composite (the essence) (Ary, et al., 2010; Creswell, 2013). These characteristics enabled the researcher to explore the phenomenon of
leadership development in international agricultural development through the lens of executive leaders in non-government organizations.

Participants

Participants for this study were selected through a purposive sampling method (Ary, et al., 2010). “Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon being studied” (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). To participate in this study, participants must have met the criteria related to the phenomenon of interest, including:

- Hold an executive leadership position in a U.S.-based non-government organization,
- Be employed by an organization conducting international agricultural development work, and
- Willing to share about their personal leadership development experiences within international agricultural development.

These criteria enabled the researcher to capture the phenomenon of leadership development experiences and various influences of leader self-efficacy through focus on the level of leadership with the greatest responsibility for directing development work and creating a culture where leadership growth is possible to sustain the organization’s work into the future. The essence of executive leader development experiences may influence the degree to which challenges are met with efficacious belief and establish common needs for sustained leadership development in the field of international agricultural development.

Twelve executive leaders (i.e. Chief Executive Officer, President, Executive Director, etc.) of non-government organizations engaged in international development work participated in this study (Table 3-1). The researcher attended the ECHO
International Agricultural Development Conference in Ft. Myers, FL where potential participants were identified through learning about various organizations serving in this field. Four participants were secured through email invitations following the conference. To follow the snowball sampling method (Creswell, 2006), each participant was asked at the end of their interview to recommend other executive leaders in international agricultural development for the researcher to contact; two participants were gained through the first level of snowball recommendations. Additional invitations were sent to participating organizations of the Accord Network, which is a network for similar organizations recommended by one of the initial participants. Three participants were added following the second round of snowball recommendations. One additional participant was secured through a professional colleague who served on the Board of Directors for an international agricultural development organization; a second participant was secured via the snowball recommendation of this participant. A final participant was secured through the recommendation of a personal connection of the researcher.

The twelve participants of this study included nine males and three females. Participant age ranged from 36 to 70 years old; three participants fell within the range of 35-45 years of age, five participants ranged between 46-55 years of age, and four participants were over 56 years of age. The academic backgrounds of the participants included two having their high school diploma as the highest degree earned, five having earned a bachelor’s degree, four having earned a master’s degree, and one having earned a doctorate. Half of the participants hold academic degrees within an agricultural field or international focus (Table 3-1). Participants’ profile information was obtained
through the interview process. Participants were assigned pseudonyms through an online name generator to maintain anonymity (Table 3-1).

Participants represent thirteen international agricultural development organizations, as one participant serves in an executive leadership position simultaneously with two organizations (Table 3-2). These organizations provide numerous services around the world addressing hunger and poverty through agricultural development (crop development, farm training, animal husbandry, etc.) as a strategic component of their work. Within the purposive sample, three organizations were founded between 1970 and 1985, five organizations were founded between 1986 and 2000, and five organizations were founded between 2001 and 2012. Half of the participants were the founder of the organization they currently lead (Table 3-3). Experience within their current, executive leadership position ranged from 3 months to 22 years, with four having served four years or less, three having served five to ten years, and five having served eleven years or more within their current position; three within the final category have served twenty years or more (Table 3-3).

Gross receipts, as noted on the most recent publicly posted IRS-990 forms, indicated that five of the organizations represented had gross receipts less than $500,000, three organizations had gross receipts between $500,001 and $2 million, and five organizations had gross receipts between $2,000,001 and $5 million (Table 3-2). Additionally, staffing of the organizations ranged from none to 76 paid staff (Table 3-2). Four organizations have no paid staff to five paid staff, three organizations have six to ten paid staff, two organizations have eleven to fifteen paid staff, two organizations have 16-25 paid staff, and two organizations have over 26 paid staff. Organizational
information was obtained through Guidestar and IRS-990 reports to demonstrate variability in the purposive sample. Though not explicitly stated, eleven of the thirteen organizations in this study have faith-based foundations undergirding the efforts in international agricultural development.

**Instrumentation**

Qualitative research recognizes the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection (Seidman, 2013). Adaptability is a key benefit to the human interviewer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interview protocol (Appendix D) was based upon Garmon’s (2007) research on self-efficacy and women leaders. Several of her questions aligned with the intent of Objective two regarding self-efficacy sources, as well as the general background questions. Additionally, open-ended questions were included in the protocol to explore the lived experiences of the participants and minimize the guidance of the researcher in the reconstruction of experience with the phenomenon (Seidman, 2013). Various questions were included to address the elements of the conceptual model to gain an in-depth understanding of the leadership environment, leader behaviors, and leader cognitions, as well as the mediating practices of leadership experiences, needed competencies, and mentoring. “Over the course of interviews, the interviewer may notice that several participants have highlighted a particular issue, and the interviewer may want to know how other participants would respond to that issue” (Seidman, 2013, p. 94). A question regarding the challenges of leadership succession was later included in the protocol for direct inquiry following the first half of the participants noting the issue as a major challenge.
Data Collection

Approval for this study was received from the University of Florida Internal Review Board as an exempt study (Appendix A). Following attendance of the 2016 ECHO International Agricultural Development Conference, the researcher sent email invitations to prospective participants (Appendix B); email dates were recorded in a spreadsheet and a follow-up reminder sent if no response was received within 2-4 weeks. A final reminder invitation was sent if no response was received after a subsequent 2-4 week period. Interested prospective research participants were provided with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent for review (Appendix C). Once the individual reviewed, signed, and returned the document to the researcher, an interview time was established for each participant. Invitation emails followed systematically with each recommendation through the snowball process. While interviews were estimated to take between 45-90 minutes, actual interviews ranged between 35 and 70 minutes in duration. Due to the various locations of participants across the United States, participants were provided with web or phone access information to join a GoToMeeting session at the designated interview time.

“A phenomenological approach to interviewing focuses on the experiences of participants and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2013, p. 16). Data were collected through in-depth, personal, semi-structured interviews with each participant. “Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to follow an interview protocol with pre-determined core questions, while also allowing participants to add anecdotal information that enriches the study” (Ball, 2017, p. 80). Thus, an established interview protocol (Appendix D) was utilized to provide a simple structure to guide participants through the details of their lived experience (Seidman, 2013). Interview
questions were carefully designed to address the points of inquiry for this study (Table 3-4); yet, questions were structured as open-ended to enable informal, interactive aspects of the phenomenological interview process (Moustakas, 1994). While Seidman (2013) recommended a three-part, 90-minute interview structure for maximizing the recollection of the phenomenon, it was also noted that alternatives to the recommended structure may be utilized with no effect on the results, which provided adaptability to participants’ schedules. Due to the nature of executive organizational leaders’ time constraints, a single in-depth interview was pursued for this study, ranging from 35-75 minutes in length (Ball, 2017; Nyukorong & Quisenberry, 2016).

One interview was conducted in person, while the remaining interviews were conducted over GoToMeeting for video or phone capability. Interviews were conducted between February 3, 2017 and May 24, 2017. Though snowball and purposive sampling enable variation for a study, the researcher must recognize when enough data has been collected to understand the phenomenon of interest (Seidman, 2013). The researcher noted the emergence of similarities from participant responses with participants seven and eight. Saturation of the data was further confirmed through the remaining interviews of the study. Participants were also added to sufficiently reflect a range of gender, age, and experience levels. Interviews were recorded through GoToMeeting, converted to MP4 files, and then sent to a third-party transcription service. The researcher received the transcription document approximately one week after submission to the transcription service.

Supporting data were collected through online resources, including organizational web pages and the Guidestar database. Information regarding
organizational foundations (mission, vision, etc.), current activities, and staffing were obtained through each participant’s organization website. Financial data and employment data were retrieved through the Guidestar database for nonprofit organizations. These additional points of data aided in developing participant profiles and understanding the leadership environment in which each participant works (Hailey, 2006; Hailey & James, 2004), and to verify participant eligibility for this study.

Data Analysis

“In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). To reach this understanding, the researcher much put aside personal experiences and beliefs regarding the matter of inquiry through the phenomenological epoche and bracketing; the epoche enabled connection and empathy within perceived researcher bias, while bracketing facilitated the process of recognizing meanings and essences with the suspension of personal thoughts throughout the data analysis process (Bednall, 2006). Following the epoche process, transcripts were systematically reviewed for themes and key descriptors to determine the essence of the phenomenon following Creswell’s (2013) prescribed method (adapted from Moustakas, 1994):

1. Describe personal experiences with the phenomenon of interest. (epoche)
   The researcher recorded assumptions, connections, and experiences with each objective, as well as recorded the researcher subjectivity statement to provide readers with an accurate portrayal of bracketed biases.

2. Develop a list of non-repetitive, significant statements. (horizontalization)
   Interview transcripts were reviewed in accordance to the objectives of the study. Significant statements were highlighted in the respective objective color.
3. Group the significant statements into themes. (clustering)

Significant statements were reviewed by participant and transferred to a spreadsheet. A meaning statement was assigned for each significant statement.

4. Create an “individual textural description” of the experience for each participant.

Significant statements for objective one were reviewed for each individual and a summary textural statement was composed.

5. Develop an “individual structural description” for each participant

Significant statements for objectives two through four were reviewed for each individual and a summary structural statement was composed.

6. Develop an “individual textural-structural description” for each participant. (essence)

The statements were combined and sent to individual participants for member checking to occur.

7. Determine the meaning and essence(s) of the phenomenon of interest through a composite textural-structural description.

To establish the composite essence of leadership development within the context of this study, significant statements were grouped by objective into tabs of a spreadsheet, printed and manually separated, then individually reviewed and clustered according to similarities among the participants. Each cluster of responses were then assigned a theme, as well as clustered into subthemes when appropriate. Themes and subthemes were recorded in the spreadsheet for ease of sorting and future reference. The essence was developed through the emergent themes and subthemes of the data.

Measures of Qualitative Validity and Reliability - Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) noted four parallel aspects of naturalistic inquiry to scientific research that establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). Golafshani (2003) noted, “Engaging multiple methods, such as, observation, interviews and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities” (p. 604). This study engaged several strategies to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings.
Credibility

Guba (1981) emphasized, “The testing of credibility is often referred to as doing "member checks," that is, testing the data with members of the relevant human data source groups” (p. 80). Credibility in this study was established through member checks. Participants were provided with individual textural and structural descriptions of the data for feedback and analysis of accuracy in contrast with the original transcription of their individual interview (Appendix G). Minor corrections were received on the original transcripts; however, interpretations of the data were confirmed.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research reflects a deep understanding of context; the potential for findings to be transferable to another context is contingent upon a strong fit between two contexts (Guba, 1981). Creswell (2013) recommended at least two validation strategies to be used in any qualitative research study. In this study, rich descriptions of the emergent themes provided a depth of contextual understanding to the findings. Rich descriptions through multiple participant perspectives enables readers to gather a realistic grasp of the experience and adds validity to the findings (Creswell, 2013). These contextual descriptions may enable the transfer of findings to other non-government organizations serving in the field of international agricultural development; findings may have implications for future leader development within these organizations. Additionally, triangulation of data collection provided validation through the review of organizational web site documents prior to each interview, reviewing artifacts such as vision and mission statements, strategic plans, and review of leads to umbrella organizations within the field supporting development work. The researcher kept a
journal throughout the research and interview process and utilized it as an additional source during data analysis to confirm key interview points.

**Dependability**

The nature of qualitative research utilizing humans as both instruments and subjects reflect the concepts of dependability by the researcher's ability to reliably ascribe variance to its source (Guba, 1981). Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the consistency of the coding process to ensure replicability of the study. For this study, dependability was established through the use of an interview guide, audio recording of the interviews, and coding by one researcher within a condensed time frame.

**Confirmability**

This study followed the main strategy for confirmability, an audit trail (Ary, et al., 2010). The audit trail aims to provide a detailed account of the research process to provide a stable, consistent source of information that would enable another researcher to understand how the study was designed and carried out (Creswell, 2013). Field notes were taken throughout the interview process, and recording for transcription was attained. A journal was kept as an audit trail throughout this study to record notes during data collection, and document the thematic analysis process. Additionally, reflexivity through reintegration process of phenomenological research provided additional validity by keeping researcher bias at bay through data analysis (Gearing, 2004). Guba (1981) noted that methodology presumes objectivity, but presumptions aside, qualitative researchers address this concern for trustworthiness by stating their bias—specifically through the epoche and bracketing within phenomenological research—and focus on the confirmability of the data collected.
Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the relativist ontological lens, epistemological lens of social constructionism, and phenomenological theoretical frame which guided this research study. Phenomenological methodology provided the framework to explore the lived leadership development experiences of executive leaders of non-governmental organizations in international agricultural development. Participants were purposively selected based on the set criterion for this study. Data collection entailed in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as the collection of supporting artifacts for triangulation. Data were analyzed through a systematic review of transcriptions for themes and key descriptors to determine the essence and meaning of the phenomenon. These processes laid the foundation for research of the phenomenon of leadership development in international agricultural development through the lens of executive leaders in non-government organizations.
Table 3-1. Participant Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Cornell</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Agricultural Education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Philosophy &amp; Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>International Affairs &amp; Environmental Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>Aquaculture &amp; Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>International Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>Rochelle</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Political Science &amp; English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2. Organizational Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Year Founded</th>
<th>Gross Receipts</th>
<th>Paid Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization 1</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>$2,000,001 - $5 million</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 1a</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>&lt; $500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$500,001 - $2 million</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 3</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>&lt; $500,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 4</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>$2,000,001 - $5 million</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 5</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>$2,000,001 - $5 million</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 6</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>$2,000,001 - $5 million</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 7</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>$500,001 - $2 million</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 8</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>&lt; $500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 9</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>$2,000,001 - $5 million</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 10</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>&lt; $500,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 11</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$500,001 - $2 million</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 12</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>&lt; $500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-3. Executive Organizational Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Years in Current Role</th>
<th>Founder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization 1</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 1a</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 2</td>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 3</td>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 4</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 5</td>
<td>&lt; 4 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 6</td>
<td>&lt; 4 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 7</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 8</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 9</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 10</td>
<td>&lt; 4 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 11</td>
<td>&lt; 4 years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization 12</td>
<td>11 years +</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Profile</td>
<td>Leadership Cognitions and Personal Factors</td>
<td>1. Could you provide some basic information to establish your participant profile:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. What is your age?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. How long have you served in your current position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. What are your responsibilities in this position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. What is your educational background?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e. Did you have any previous experience in international agriculture development prior to this role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the structural essence of self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.</td>
<td>Leadership Cognitions and Personal Factors</td>
<td>2. Could you share with me what your experience was leading you to this position – your pathway to the position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Did you have any previous experiences that helped prepare you for your current role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Have you had any mentors, personally or professionally, that have aided in your leadership development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. What motivates you to do what you do every day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe the leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.</td>
<td>Leadership Environment</td>
<td>6. Does the organization provide opportunities for leadership development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. If so, what do those look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. If so, who has access to such opportunities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. If not, how do you continue to develop for your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.</td>
<td>Leadership Cognitions and Personal Factors &amp; Leader Behaviors</td>
<td>5. What competencies do you perceive as important for someone desiring to lead in this field of international agricultural development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.</td>
<td>Leader Behaviors &amp; Leadership Environment</td>
<td>7. What are some of the leadership challenges you face in this position? In this industry?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of leadership development experiences by NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

2. Identify the structural essence of self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development; and

4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.

Chapter 2 presented Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory as the theoretical framework for this study and explored supporting literature from McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership and Paglis and Green’s (2002) leadership self-efficacy model to frame the proposed Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development. Literature and empirical studies pertinent to the elements of leader self-efficacy, relevant competencies, and mentoring within the conceptual model were explored to provide additional context. The chapter was concluded by literature and empirical studies related to challenges in international agricultural development, the role of non-government organizations in international agricultural development, and leadership in non-government organizations. Chapter 3 presented the selected methodology and design of this research study. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth
interviews with executive leaders of NGOs working in international agricultural development. Chapter 4 explores the findings.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, which were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Upon completion of data collection, transcriptions were analyzed for significant statements regarding the phenomenon of leadership development. Data analysis followed Creswell’s (2013) prescribed method (adapted from Moustakas, 1994) for transcendental phenomenological reduction. Significant statements were identified within individual transcripts for each objective of the study. Significant statements were reviewed to assign a meaning unit or cluster, then reduced to have a non-repetitive list for each participant, a process also known as horizontalization. Individual data were reviewed and summarized to encompass each participant’s textural and structural essence of the phenomenon. The individual summary and transcription was provided to each participant for a member check. Significant statements were then compiled by objective for additional review to synthesize common themes to describe the collective textural and structural essences of the phenomenon. Interpretation of the data through thematic analysis resulted in a total of 398 significant statements and meaning units; following a second review, 303 significant statements remained within the identified themes. Objective one focused on the textural description of the phenomenon. Objectives two, three, and four addressed the structural description of the phenomenon through key angles of inquiry based upon the conceptual model, including sources of self-efficacy (leadership cognitions and personal factors), needed competencies (leadership behaviors), and challenges faced within the phenomenon (leadership environment) respectively.
A research journal was kept throughout the data collection and analysis process. Highlights of the interview were noted throughout the live interview; recorded notes regarding participant profiles were later compared to the transcribed data for accuracy of key information. Additionally, participants’ organizational information was obtained to complete their profile and provide supporting information regarding leadership development opportunities, executive leader background information, and other organizational endeavors. The researcher sought to provide rich descriptions of the various experiences and structures of the phenomenon. Findings reflect the collective themes identified within the textural and structural essences of the phenomenon.

**Objective 1**

Objective one explored the leadership development experiences of NGO executive leaders. Following the individual participant analysis, significant statements were separated in an excel spreadsheet by objective. The initial 127 significant statements for objective one were analyzed through a manual sorting process to identify common experiences of the phenomenon. The textural essence of NGO executive leader development experiences emerged under the premise of three chronologically framed themes: past leadership development experiences, current leadership development practices, and leadership development practices for future leaders. Eleven subthemes emerged within the three themes (Table 4-1), including professional experiences (past), educational experiences (past), formative experiences (past), mentoring experiences (past), self-directed learning (current), formal learning opportunities (current), on-the-job experiences (current, mentoring needs (current), establishing a community or network (current), empowerment of staff and others toward development (future), and opportunities for the next generation (future).
Past Leadership Development Experiences

Past leadership development experiences reflected the various lived experiences of NGO executive leaders that were formative in their journey to an executive leadership position. Four subthemes emerged from the data regarding these developmental experiences: professional experiences, educational experiences, formative experiences, and mentoring experiences.

Professional experiences

The first subtheme to emerge focused on work experiences prior to the participant’s executive leadership role. Half of the participants noted previous experience in the international agricultural development field prior to their executive role. While one executive director, Rochelle, noted, “professionally, I have never had any formal managerial responsibilities prior to coming here” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017), other participants like Randell expressed having “quite a bit of management experience especially in the small organization level” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Cornell also shared that he “held a number of leadership roles in other venues” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017), and Alan mentioned that he “worked with a couple other NGO’s” (Personal Communication, May 23, 2017). Additionally, Matt said, “I worked for a for-profit company for my whole career up until the time I came on board here” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). However, Rochelle shared a bit more about her prior professional experiences:

I started my career on Capitol Hill working as a legislative assistant for a member of Congress. When you work for a member of the House, you sort of are a jack of all trades, master of none, but one of the portfolios that I had was agriculture and that included the Congressman’s work on hunger. . . . I left the Hill and joined a small lobbying firm mainly to work on defense and technology issues, particularly on the appropriation side of things. So nothing tied to any of this. I spent the next 11 years with the
lobbying firm working with Fortune 500 companies, large colleges and universities, hospitals, a little bit of everything... But after a while I was like all right, I don’t want to do this forever. How can I take the skills and talents and knowledge that I have and apply it to a more cause-driven purpose? (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Felicia knew the path to international agricultural development earlier in life and explored the profession through the Peace Corps:

So I came out of the Peace Corps wanting to work for an organization that was focused on providing small older farmers with multi-year technical assistance to transition from burn farming to sustainable farming. And I was shocked to find there was no such organization in existence... So coming out of the Peace Corps I didn’t feel quite ready to start a brand new non-profit. I had gone to the Peace Corps more or less right out of college. So I worked for a couple of other non-profits. (Personal Communication, March, 23, 2017)

Finally, Stan recognized the transferability of skills from the professional experiences on his journey to be an executive director:

I had worked coordinating sort of grassroots community-level development as well as some policy work, so some direct engagement in that as well as some management functions and had been involved in a lot of in different pieces, that going to my current job, defining a programmatic mission developing programs, raising money, you know, managing people and programs, et cetera. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)

While participant experiences varied greatly, the lasting impact of their professional experiences was shared. Similarly, educational experiences offered opportunities for participants to develop as leaders with content knowledge and practical applications.

**Educational experiences**

The second subtheme to emerge within the frame of past experiences was educational experiences. In Chapter 3, Table 3-1 identified the educational backgrounds of all participants regarding highest degree earned. Half of the participants shared either an international component to their formal degree work or a formal degree connected to agriculture. These formal educational experiences helped shape the approaches to
international agricultural development work, particularly for Rachel: “I would say that I probably come at agricultural development more from a community health perspective and a political systems perspective (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Even one course can make a lasting impact. Randell reflected on a Perspectives course he and his wife took, “We took a course that changed our lives as far as our view of the world and all the different people, people groups that populate it now and have populated it over time” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). For others, such as Stuart, the degree path led to experiences that shaped their pathway to leadership within international agricultural development:

I started graduate school my last year in the Navy. And, yeah, God took me in a different direction as a result of my master’s required a foreign language. I spent a summer in Guatemala studying Spanish. And that was where God opened my eyes to issues of extreme poverty and injustice. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Casey also shared the impact of his education as preparation to lead an international agricultural development organization, “I switched to aquaculture with the more extensive farming for the master’s as I felt called to go into this field” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). Educational experiences provided meaningful points within several participants’ leadership journey; while some of these educational ventures were also formative for some participants, others encountered formative experiences in different contexts.

**Formative experiences**

The next subtheme, formative experiences, emerged as a complimentary theme to both the professional experiences and educational experiences. It expressed the moments that guided participants to find their pathway within international agricultural development work, and for six of the twelve participants, how the organization he or she
leads began. Stan shared, “We knew from the beginning that creating an organization has lots of challenges and demands” yet he pressed forward for a cause (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). For Casey, a calling to a specific area but lack of support to be sent there led to the organization’s formation:

And after finishing my master’s, I talked to a lot of different missions organizations and couldn’t find any of them that would send me to Panama to do this sort of work. It was either they would send me somewhere else to do this sort of work, or send me to Panama to do something else. And, so that’s why I ended up basically having to start the organization. It’s just kind of started all from there, I guess you would say. (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017)

Felicia found herself in a professional situation where the organization was not following through with work as promised:

I was personally responsible to the people I had hired and the farmers that were starting this program. So I decided that if I was ever going to start a new non-profit as I’d thought about, probably now was the time, even though I didn’t have any money and very limited skills and experience. It felt sort of like a now or never kind of situation. Since it also didn’t seem terribly realistic, I gave myself one day to figure out a reasonable way of doing it and said if I can’t figure it out tomorrow, then I should just face reality and go get a real job. And then in that one day that I gave myself, I got an e-mail from a man in Switzerland who I’d met on my last trip to Central America. And when I told him, he said to open a bank account for my new non-profit and he’d wired some money. And the next day there was $6,000 in that account. (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017)

Cornell founded his organization after seeing a need while traveling, then seeking unsuccessfully to find an organization to serve that need:

The first time I went to Kenya, I guess two things that stuck in my mind were the lack of water and the fact that so many people were drinking contaminated water. And so that was an immediate thing, how can I help to solve that problem and then the other problem was malnutrition and hunger and so actually how I got involved in that was trying to find somebody else to do it. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Alan shared a similar experience:
As I was doing some mission work, I was asked by a gentleman that I knew to go over to Nigeria and visit a doctor and his wife that were missionaries over there in a remote part of Nigeria. So, I went over there and God spoke to me and told me that I was supposed to be helping them out over there. So, we came back and formed this organization. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017)

Having founded an organization earlier in his career, Dale expressed the importance of discerning when the need for transition of leadership is needed within an organization, and confidently moving to the next organization: “I believed as much as I knew anything that I wasn’t supposed to lead the organization, and if God didn’t want me to lead it and my life was His, He wouldn’t waste anything entrusted to him” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Volunteering within the organization also provided a formative connection to leadership of the organization. Stuart shared, “I came back to finish grad school and started volunteering at the organization just because it happened to be locally based” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Mark’s formative volunteer experience was through service on the Board of Directors, mission trips, and then a calling to the position:

I served on the Board of the organization that I currently lead for about six years. . . . Prior to coming into this role, did about 15 short term mission trips, short term, you know, development organizational trips that helped shape my heart for stepping into the role. . . . We’re a faith-based non-profit, so there was a part of that that was a calling for me that this is where God wanted me to go, out of the for-profit world. And then that, combined with the alignment of my skills in organizational leadership and entrepreneurial leadership and the needs of the organization, seemed to be a fit and a match. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Then, Matt found the organization he now leads through volunteering after moving to a new city for a professional assignment. He said, “I became involved here with the organization and became very passionate” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). These formative experiences played integral roles in motivating participants along their
leadership journeys, as did the numerous individuals who walked with them through such experiences of growth and development.

Mentoring experiences

The final subtheme that emerged within the past leadership development experiences theme was mentoring experiences. Participants overwhelmingly noted the impact of mentors toward their leadership development over the years. Regarding serving in a manner that respect, honors, and brings dignity to those being served, Matt noted, “I’ve had some great mentors over the years that have modeled that for me” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). Reflecting on a key mentor that inspired his work, Dale shared, “He was a guy who had deep and profound wisdom. He was brilliant, he’d honestly had a lot of life experience” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Felicia commented, “A lot of people seem to have one key mentor. And I don’t feel like I’ve had that so much. I’ve had a number of people that I’ve learned from” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). Randell shared the sentiment of multiple mentors, “There have been, you know, a number of people along the way that have been mentors” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Other participants, like Rochelle, recalled specific mentors who helped on their leadership journey, such as this participant’s reflection:

Oh absolutely. In some ways, almost too many to count. Going back to when I was on the Hill, our legislative director was just an amazing woman and really helped me not make some of those early career missteps and there was another woman who actually, she was a lobbyist, but she continues to be a friend and a mentor just sort of digging through things and helping to think beyond sort of what’s right in front of you and to the bigger picture. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Whether a single individual or multiple people investing in their lives, participants experienced the deep value of mentoring toward leadership development.
Current Leadership Development Practices

Current leadership development practices demonstrated the efforts executive NGO leaders are making to continue development within their role. Five subthemes emerged from the data concerning developmental practices: self-directed learning, formal learning opportunities, on-the-job experiences, mentoring needs, and establishing a community/network.

Self-directed learning

The first subtheme to emerge from the data was self-directed learning. An attitude of desired continued improvement was sensed from the participants. Some participants like Cornell directly stated this desire, “I’m seeking ways to improve my leadership” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017), as well as Matt, “I spend a fair amount of time focusing on my own sort of development of, I’ll say, understanding myself so that I can sort of be the best fit I can be in different situations” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). While other participants like Dale were a bit more understated in their desire:

I believe that whatever gifts, talents, and time that I might possess they have been entrusted with me as a steward to use them to glorify God and hopefully bless other people and that in that process I can know joy and significance and all those things as kind of a direct byproduct of that. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Yet, Casey noted the challenge of personal development effort, “As far as me to improve, right now because of time and money, probably not a whole lot” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). Felicia also reflected on development efforts and noted, “I tend to do things that don’t feel like that’s what I’m doing, but that ends up being the case. . . . It’s just looking at what are the biggest questions to be addressing” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017).
Participants noted the primary means of self-directed learning as reading. Stuart said, “I would say the biggest is reading, making sure I’m trying to stay up with both literature and conversations. It’s always harder and harder to do, especially things are a little bit broad” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Mark echoed, “So I read a lot. I’m a prolific reader. I don’t really have the bandwidth right now to do formal education in the development space or ag space in particular” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Stan said, “Reading as well, certainly is another key” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017) and Cornell mentioned, “I read books about leadership” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017). Alan focused on Biblical scripture for development: “I read the Word. I meditate on the Word. Joshua 1:8 says meditate on the Word day and night and you will be prosperous and successful. So, I meditate on the Word day and night” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017).

Finally, Dale noted the importance of reading as a leader:

One is to practice what I teach or preach about being a learner, by reading and listening, recognizing that there is no area of my leadership or expertise that there isn’t more that I can learn and that sometimes important things can be learned from the most unexpected teachers. So that’s a big thing. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

These self-directed means of leadership development offer flexibility for continued learning amidst the numerous responsibilities of executive leaders; yet, formal opportunities still have a role to play in leadership development.

**Formal learning opportunities**

The next subtheme to emerge from the data was formal learning opportunities. Cornell noted staff retreats and weekly staff conferences as expected means of consistent, structured leadership development (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017). Randell shared, “A number of different courses I’ve taken are very specific to
what I do…into the agricultural side, I’ve taken a couple of courses at ECHO” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Stuart noted, “Harvard Business School Alumni Association has a really interesting nonprofit leadership course” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Regarding the benefit of a formal coach, Rochelle enthusiastically shared:

There’s certificates in nonprofit management. I browse them from time to time but there’s nothing that I have found other than working with the coach that seems to be worth the time and the investment. . . . I’ve actually been working with an executive coach for the last year and a half. . . . He’s been great in just sort of thinking through how to approach tricky situations or things that I can be doing to more effectively lead the team. So that’s been very, very valuable. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

A wealth of formal opportunities have come for Rachel through a couple of foundations in the organization’s local area that are incredibly supportive of development for nonprofit leaders:

They have group training for all the nonprofits once a month. . . . And then I went through a program that is . . . basically like a community development program so the idea is that they get together future leaders of the community with even current leaders of the community and have intentional dialogue. So you talk about race and religion and people and people groups and problems and talk through how to solve big problems in your community and it was an eight-month program concurrent with work. (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017)

Formal opportunities provide means of leadership development for those who have financial and time access to such events and trainings. Limited access to formal opportunities, however, can be countered with practical, on-the-job experiences for executive leadership development.

**On-the-job experiences**

Another emergent subtheme from the data was related to the impact of on-the-job experience as integral to leadership development within the executive leader role of
an NGO in international agricultural development. Matt shared experiences from “formalized training things to most of it’s experiential. It’s kind of on-the-job stuff. I mean, it happens pretty much every day” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). Stan emphasized the importance of on-the-job development experiences particularly for this field:

That sort of practical hands-on learning by doing approach is, I think in our case, essential that we’re doing sort of grassroots bottom-up rural development. Overall, it’s kind of learning by doing and reaching out to and ask advice from different people. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)

Additionally, Rochelle expressed the integral role of experiencing the projects within your organization:

I think probably the biggest opportunity that I’ve had has been to travel and go to visit development projects firsthand. It’s one thing to read about sustainable agriculture techniques for female small holder farmers, and another to go to Choma, Zambia and talk to women who, until they started using some crop diversification and better crop storage techniques, truly didn’t have enough food to feed their children for the year. So I think that hands-on learning has been really valuable. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

On-the-job experiences offer accessible and relevant opportunities for leadership development within the specific context in which the executive leader works. Journeying within an executive leadership role also presents the need for mentoring for continued leadership development.

Mentoring needs

The next subtheme to emerge from the data focused on mentoring needs within the NGO executive leader role. Though an emergent subtheme within past leadership development experiences, participants, like Stan, expressed that in addition to the accumulated practical skills for the job, “having somebody who’s done it and could
mentor and point to solutions in different ways, I think, could be valuable” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). A shared sentiment among participants was the struggle early on in the executive role. Stuart noted, “especially in those early years, I was kind of floundering . . . way too many of the lessons I’ve learned, I’ve learned the hard way” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Casey echoed, “It was a horrible stumbling through the woods trying to figure out all the 501c3 issues” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017), and Stan expressed, “I feel like I could probably use some more” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Casey wished, “some of those areas that I know I’m for sure lacking . . . I wish there was a way to either get training of mentoring or something” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017).

Felicia expressed the important role a board can potentially play in mentoring, “Having his perspective was very helpful, along with many of the Board members who served. And all of them have had good advice along the way that’s been very helpful” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017).

Finally, Dale shared the challenging process of finding that valued mentor within a NGO executive leader role:

I have a couple people in my life that know me really well and that I invite to speak into my life and I’ve shared with them. I have been looking for others, now that I’ve kind of been in this for a while and settling into this place and this role a little bit, I’ve been looking for other people that are in comparable situations that might be good sounding boards, kind of resource for me and so I’ve met with a few people because it’s an investment of time and energy which is in scarce supply. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

While the need is often recognized for mentors, a key challenge is connecting with individuals who share the executive level experience. With limited key mentors the are
able to connect to the challenges of executive, nonprofit leaders, peer networks enable a community of support for continued leadership development and growth.

**Establishing a community or network**

The final subtheme to emerge within the current leadership development practices theme was establishing a community or network. Cornell shared:

> I say learn from the successes of others as well as the mistakes. And so that's what I try to do is as I rub shoulders with other people, I'm one of those people that asks a lot of questions and so if I see something that I don't understand or I see something that seems to be working, I try to find out why. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Randell echoed, “I really think we spend an awful lot of energy reinventing the wheel and you know how there is a certain amount of figuring it out on your own that has to happen because we’re all unique individuals, but we don’t have to learn everything the hard way” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Dale said, “Having important, valuable people in my life that I listen to and share with is an important part of continuing to learn and grow and staying teachable” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). He added, “There are a couple of networks that just make sense to be a part of” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). The Accord Network, IndigDev, Opportunity Collaboration, and InterAction were all professional networks mentioned by participants. Regarding the impact of involvement in The Accord Network, Mark expressed, “A ton frankly. I don’t have a development background educationally. I don’t have a development background experientially.” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Felicia shared regarding her participation with Opportunity Collaboration:

> It’s a gathering of about 300 leaders from organizations, foundations and businesses that are working towards ending poverty around the world. And so there are 300 people that are all working on it come together. There are no keynotes. There are no speeches. There are no presentations. It’s all conversations. And the discussions are around
things like leadership and power dynamics and all these broader, over-arching issues that impact our work as leaders. I always go at it thinking about maybe I’m going to meet a funder, maybe I’m going to meet a new partner, maybe I’m going to, you know, come up with some new way of doing our work that are in the field, but I always come out of it with new ways of thinking and better leadership skills, along with the other things sometimes too. (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017)

The importance of community was also emphasized as a means of organizational development, as well as personal development by Stuart:

When I came to work here, one of the things I realized is we had no idea of the quality or lack of quality of our own program. We had no benchmarks. Our board believed that we were doing the best work there was, but we had no idea what other people were doing, or where to benchmark, or what we could learn. So it's network and learn. Almost every problem, somebody's addressed before. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Such networks enable opportunities for continued development via strategic use of travel, as demonstrated by Mark, “as I’m traveling in different places around the country, I try and think strategically. And, you know, extend the trip for a day for meetings just for my own personal learning” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Establishing a network or community within executive leaders who share contexts of work is invaluable to executive leader growth.

**Leadership Development Practices for Future Leaders**

Leadership development practices for future leaders provided insight to what NGO executive leaders are doing to enable the development of leadership for the future of their organizations. Two subthemes emerged from the data regarding developmental practices for future leaders: empowerment of staff and others toward development, and opportunities for the next generation.
Empowerment of staff and others toward development

The first subtheme to emerge from the data was empowerment of staff and others toward development. Empowerment of others comes in the form of belief for change for Matt: “I know every person has the ability to implement or lead change in their own lives or in the lives of their family or the community or their company or whatever they happen to be affiliated with” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017).

Within the context of international agricultural development, he continued:

We’re going in and empowering them with training and or material items, hard assets that they can then develop their own tools and supplies for agriculture for the long term which really plays well into my thinking about how do you lead? Well you just kind of keep reminding people that they’re the ones who lead their own lives, right? (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Alan echoed the application:

So, that’s really my adage and what I’ve learned through working in these other countries and working with these other NGO’s is to try to empower the people to let them do that, and it’s also helped me in my life here as a homebuilder and a retired cop and dad and grandfather and everything to try to empower the people around me. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017)

For several participants, the people around include the organizational staff that should be invested in to ensure the longevity of the organization, even in the midst of challenges. Felicia shared, “We offer opportunities for all of our staff to develop their skills, but it’s often tight. And everybody always has twice as much work to do as time in a day to do it.” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). Dale demonstrated a strategic means of thought on staff development, “we look for ways to give people an opportunity to grow their competencies not only through kind of more formal training things but also in scope of work they do here.” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Regarding support for external leadership development and training
opportunities, Stuart expressed, “We have made available a number of courses, we also will directly pay for training, and have a small scholarship fund for people who want to get a graduate education or take courses” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Additionally, Mark highlighted that his organization is “encouraging staff to participate in training . . . the Accord Network has different levels of training” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Empowering staff and others toward development creates a pathway of leadership for others to continue the strong work of the organization. It also supports further recruitment and development of leaders through various opportunities offered to the next generation of leaders within international agricultural development.

**Opportunities for the next generation.**

The other subtheme that arose from the data was opportunities for the next generation. Several participants noted internship programs within their organization that offer opportunities to introduce young professionals or college students to international agricultural development work at its most basic form. Rachel shared, “The intern program . . . mentor them as individuals as and so we talk through like a big picture dreams and goals and then like . . . what they want to do to achieve them like this year, you know” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Randell said, “For moving our organization forward we’re always looking to replicate ourselves . . . even though our financial resources are limited, our human resources are growing” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Stan echoed:

> We are trying to encourage and, you know, constant source of dialog to work more with young people both at the community level as mentor bring young people into this work in organizations but again, you know, you have to do that as a function of the resources you have. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)
Finally, Rochelle added:

There are probably three to four younger professional women and men not on my team here who I hope I’m providing that same kind of sounding board and guidance and a little bit of experience that I can add to their thinking and decision making. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Investing in the next generation of leaders enables a line of leaders to emerge, as well as keep connected to the rising generation filled with innovative ideas for the industry.

**Objective 2**

Objective 2 delved into the influences of self-efficacy expectations on the leadership development experiences of NGO executive leaders. Following the individual participant analysis, significant statements were separated in an excel spreadsheet by objective. The initial 111 significant statements for objective two were evaluated and coded for themes within the framework of Bandura’s (1977) efficacy expectations: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. The structural essence of NGO executive leadership development experiences was then evaluated through a manual sorting process to identify emergent subthemes from the data. Six subthemes emerged pertaining to various practices for leadership development from 66 significant statements (Table 4-2). Subthemes emerged within three of the four efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977): performance accomplishments (agricultural & organizational), verbal persuasion (spiritually based persuasion & stakeholder persuasion), and emotional arousal (multiplication of impact & responding with care).

**Performance Accomplishments**

All participants noted a variety of professional and personal experiences that contributed to their leadership development and efficacy in serving as an executive
leader. Randell emphasized, “You know, everything in the past if you’re paying any attention at all is going to contribute to where you’re at and where you’re going and what you’re doing” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Two subthemes emerged within the performance accomplishments theme, reflecting the experiential benefits toward the agricultural and organizational aspects of executive leader responsibilities.

**Agricultural**

A subtheme emerged from the data that reflected the benefits of various mastery experiences connected primarily to the agricultural aspects of the organizations each serves. Dale shared, “I worked in 25 countries around the world and did a lot of small-scale ag-related work” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Cornell noted, “This trip coming up will be my 22nd to Africa . . . my background in teaching and agriculture. . . . What I want to do is I want to do mission work with people, not to people” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017). Direct experience in an agricultural development organization benefitted Stan:

The job immediately prior to this I was working with an NGO . . . for 13 years and started in Central America coordinating regional programs for two years, came back to the US, coordinated Latin American regional programs, and then eventually moved to a global action learning role and sort of best practices, you know, role. And that NGO is fundamentally about agricultural and rural development. . . . I had also had some experience for three years I worked as a consultant . . . [where] a number of those [programs] related to agriculture and rural development as well. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)

Casey shared the importance of previous learning experiences to their organization’s current work:

It was interning with one organization but really in the international ag side of things, it was more with the University of Panama. I came down to work with them for a few months and studied with them more than anything. . . . while I was here for that four months is when I really began a lot of the projects that I’ve been working on for the last 12 years or so. Well, the
original ones. I’ve now moved on to other villages, other places, but the original projects and how things really started and got rolling was in that four months. (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017)

Finally, Randell demonstrated the impact of learning the technical information specific to the work their organization does:

Just to be clear, I have and my wife—we have really no other than the training we’ve gotten from ECHO [before serving as missionaries in Tanzania], we don’t have any agriculture experience. We have no degrees, no training in it, no nutrition training, none of that. We think it’s hilarious that, that God put us in this position teaching about nutrition and growing things because we really don’t. We’re not qualified really other than, we’ve become qualified. We’ve become experts in this little niche of doing this. (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017)

Agricultural experiences help connect directly to the field work the organization does, and open a line of communication and understanding between leaders and others. While technical, agricultural knowledge enables executive leaders to connect with others in the organization, experiences relating to administrative tasks and resource management aid the executive in leading the organization.

Organizational

The second subtheme to emerge within the performance accomplishments theme reflected the benefits of experiences to the organizational responsibilities of the executive NGO leader. Though prior experiences in the Peace Corps volunteer and Latin America Program Coordinator provided beneficial experiences, Felicia reflected specifically, “working at [organization], I learned a lot from the leadership there, both the fundraising leadership and the organizational leadership” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). For Stuart, military service offered valuable leadership training for making decisions as an executive NGO leader:

One of the things being an officer in the Navy teaches you to do is how to manage and lead in an environment where you don’t necessarily know all
the technical details and don’t need to. . . . But I learned how to know enough and listened enough to be able to manage something without knowing the details. And in turn, that has been very beneficial in this job because I'm also not an agricultural technician, or an agronomist, or an ecologist, or anything else. But I know how to manage in a situation where I don't necessarily know all those details. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Additionally, Rochelle expressed the benefits of political experiences to her current executive leadership position:

I would say certainly running the campaign was part of it. There was some fundraising involved with that which obviously with any nonprofit, that’s a key part of what you’re working on . . . That’s a lot of what I do now. Certainly the advocacy experience throughout my career, part of what we’re trying to do is help with education and awareness around the role that US policy plays in global development. That’s certainly helpful. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Alan expressed that prior experience with NGOs and in the police academy helped his leadership development, “As far as administratively . . . I’ve been to the school of hard knocks a little bit” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017). Finally, Dale shared how serving as a consultant for the organization provided the groundwork for eventually leading the organization:

As a consultant, I helped develop that plan and I was asked to bring that to the board of directors and present it and I did so and basically what the board said at the end of it was we agree 100 percent with the plan but we’re not going to approve it. And it’s because we don’t have the additional and right capacity that we need here to lead it. So that kind of ended up being a little bit of a gut check for me. Do I believe enough in this plan and the purposes and the potential that I saw here? (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Organizational understanding influences the effectiveness and efficiency of a leader’s approach to various issues faced within the organization. It is, however, improbable to expect a leader to learn everything through their own experiences; learning from others
enables a collaborative and deeper understanding of options for advancing the field of international agricultural development.

**Vicarious Experiences**

All participants shared examples within this theme of learning lessons from others that have aided in their personal leadership development toward serving as an executive NGO leader. Cornell succinctly stated, “learn from the successes of others as well as the mistakes” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017). Dale expressed that there “is a shared desire to get better at what we’re trying to do with them” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Felicia echoed, “I learned a lot from the farmers that I worked with . . . The other organization I mentioned, their executive director taught me a whole lot to avoid and what not to do . . . It wasn't intentional, but I learned an awful lot” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). The value of learning through organizational partnerships was also shared by Stan:

> Other people in that organization—people . . . who have decades of experience working on sustainable agriculture I’ve learned a lot from as well as my colleagues that now . . . constitute our NGO partners around the world . . . those are my strongest mentors in terms of really seeing at a grounded level what strategies are effective. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017).

Randell noted, “They all have their own sets of skills that they bring, and some of them are very different from ours, so we get very different perspectives” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Rochelle reflected on the influence of a particular individual, “She’s got a lot more experience than I do and she has just been a great mentor and resource and ally over the last four years” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). Vicarious learning has helped Mark for the technical, agricultural aspects of his responsibilities:
So I have done a ton of learning on other people’s dime in the last four years. One in particular that has been very open sourced in their approach to their organization and their work and other organizations . . . So for me to learn on other people puts me way ahead of the curve of where I’d be if I said I’m going to get a development degree or an ag development degree or whatever. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Finally, Matt emphasized the importance of having an attitude that reflects a positive outlook to learn from others:

Most everybody is actually trying to be successful and do the right thing and be constructive. Everybody has different ways of doing that and sometimes we get it wrong, but ultimately we generally don’t have bad intent. Most of us have good intent. So, yes, assume merit with everybody and always ask the question of why do they think that might actually help out the situation. (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Vicarious learning enables active learning through others, benefitting both the leader and the organization through the gained knowledge and understanding. Though learning from past experiences and others provide an ample foundation for continued leadership development, leaders can also need a word of encouragement to pursue new opportunities in leadership development.

**Verbal Persuasion**

Seven of twelve participants articulated efficacious beliefs toward leadership development through the theme of verbal persuasion. Two subthemes emerged from the data regarding sources of verbal persuasion: spiritually based persuasion and stakeholder persuasion.

**Spiritually based persuasion**

The first subtheme that emerged from the data indicated a spiritually based persuasion toward decisions influencing the participant’s leadership development. Mark reflected on his transition from the board to executive director:
The first conversation was about a three-minute one. I said I’m the wrong guy. I don’t have that background and experience. I’m doing what I need to be doing, but thanks for asking. And then they came back about six months later and said, hey, we still think you might be the right guy. Would you at least consider it? Talk to us about it seriously and pray about it? The short version is that led to me being in this role. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Dale also sought that spiritually based verbal encouragement in discerning an opportunity to join the organization, “I just worked at that, my wife and I, and the way we work with things praying about it and inviting others to pray with us and ended up deciding, yeah, this is the right place for me to be” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Casey shared how his experiences in college provided spiritually based encouragement to pursue a career in international agricultural development:

I was thoroughly miserable [on my first short-term trip], and yet, I had felt pushed towards missions or pulled or however God was doing it for years before I went and after going on that trip, even though I was miserable, I still felt like God was working on me in the process. And it took another couple of years before I felt all right enough to go for a two months trip. After that, I came to Panama for a couple of months, and that’s when I interned with a missionary here and worked with the University of Panama a few days a week studying tropical agriculture. And through all of that, God just slowly changed my heart…He taught me to trust him more. (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017)

Cornell reflected on his experience following some initial searching for someone to lead an international project:

And so after a discussion again with the international dean, he said to me the person you’re looking for is you. He said you have taught basic agriculture. You’ve been there. You know what the people need and so you’re the one that needs to do this. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Spiritually based persuasion focused on the influences of faith and prayer toward the leadership journeys of participants. Key stakeholders of both an organization and within an individual leader’s life also hold persuasive power for leadership development.
Stakeholder persuasion

The other subtheme that emerged from the data was verbal persuasion from stakeholders. Rochelle noted the excellent guidance provided by the board chair, “Our board chair, has been fantastic . . . I really credit him with helping me give myself the permission to get out of the weeds and create some space to be in that strategic space more often” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). Felicia recognized the work the board was putting forth for the organization’s success, “It’s a tremendous amount that they put in. So you have got to really admire that and hand that to them” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). For other participants, the board plays an integral role in ensuring transparency and accountability for the organization. Dale remarked, “They absolutely hold me accountable . . . their support and engagement is critical” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Stuart echoed the need for transparency and oversight:

But one of the things I’ve learned is to actually ask for oversight. You know, it’s not because I don’t trust you. But if Jesus was tempted, you will be, and somebody needs to be there, not just to keep you from—not just to keep you from doing anything, but to be able to verify for the outside that everything you’re doing is clean and on the up and up. You need to have transparency because even if you are—even if you are completely upright and honest, if there’s not transparency, people will suspect you. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Additionally, participants noted that the influence and support of mentors and friends cannot be overlooked. Randell shared, “We gathered our friends together and, you know, went through this whole process with them brainstorming, looking for how can we do this thing and landed on a stand-alone nonprofit” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Finally, Dale reflected on an influential mentor, “I was privileged to be encouraged and challenged and guided and sometimes instructed by him through
the years” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Stakeholders provided key insights to decision making processes for participants along their leadership journeys. Additional experiences provide leaders with motives for leadership development through positive emotional arousal.

**Emotional Arousal**

All participants expressed the impact of emotional arousal as a source of belief in the work accomplished through international agricultural development. Two subthemes emerged from the data that reflected the physical and affective responses to the leadership environment faced: multiplication of impact and responding with care.

**Multiplication of impact**

The first subtheme to emerge from the data was multiplication of impact. Rachel shared, “The idea that our interns kind of multiply our work so that’s sort of, I mean, because it feels really small scale and so I’ve been encouraged over time like oh, we have these people that are going to go work with five more people that are going to work with five more people” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Mark echoed:

> We have the privileged position of doing is replacing generation after generation of despair with hope. . . . I could go on, story after story, frankly. It’s just amazing to me the way that we have intersected with people’s lives with the ability and privilege of impacting those lives. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Stuart reflected on a recent trip to Tanzania:

> Seeing the change in people’s lives. . . . Being there with 7,000 people and hearing their stories, celebrating with them . . . I’m able to take that and equate that then with the data that we get and see, okay, you know, these individual stories are multiplied thousands and thousands of times. That’s worthwhile. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Finally, Cornell shared the expressed generational impact of their work:
If they’re having trouble feeding their family and we teach them how to raise their own food, we’re empowering them and they’re excited about that and that gives them hope for a better life. One man who was in one of the first workshops I did, he said what you’ve taught us is more valuable than money. He said what you’ve taught us will not only impact us but will impact our children and our grandchildren. . . . If we had all day I could probably talk all day telling you stories about people and the different ways that we have impacted them through all of these things whether it be agriculture or water or education, healthcare, community development, startup businesses, people that have come to know the Lord. Lots of ways that we impact people. . . we take people from starvation to survival but we don’t want to leave them there. We want them to have a productive life. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Experiencing the multiplication of meaningful work aroused participants’ emotional desire to continue the cycle of positive impact through the work of their organization. Such experiences also invoke a caring response within the work each leader undertakes as a nonprofit executive.

**Responding with care**

The other subtheme that emerged from the data regarding emotional arousal was responding with care. Participants expressed an overall response to knowledge and awareness of international agricultural development contexts with the responsibility of leadership to respond and serve well through their influence as an organizational leader. Matt shared:

I also felt very strongly about sort of the Biblical basis around caring for those that are in difficult circumstances . . . no matter what faith tradition you look at, there’s tons to be thought about caring for those that are hurting most, that are suffering and doing something in a way that brings dignity to them through your helping. (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Mark echoed:

Our organization is the intersection of people in extreme material poverty in the most remote places on earth and people who, in most cases, are distant from the heart of God. So as a faith-based organization, our organization is the intersection of those two things. And that’s what breaks
my heart and that’s what gets me up every morning. And that’s what makes me, you know, drive 16-hour days when I need to drive 16-hour days because of those two things. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Other participants, like Dale, noted the personal response and desire to lead in those arenas: “To be a part of that reconciling, redeeming, making whole process is probably at the bottom of it for me” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Stuart added, “Getting a view of the world outside the United States and really wanting to make a difference in terms poverty and injustice” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Rochelle shared her personal interest in the work she now does back to her childhood:

In my personal life, I’ve been very interested in the issue of hunger since I was a child. I was in third grade when the major famine in Ethiopia happened in the mid-80’s, and that was formative in so many ways. And so it’s just something that’s always been part of what I care about, part of what I volunteer around, part of what I donate to, and so it was nice to be able to tie that strong personal interest to my professional abilities. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Randell shared his foundation of faith as the director of a caring response within their work:

We want to share that kind of love with everybody we can, and we can’t think of a better way to do that than the way Jesus did it. When he was here he shared not only how we can have eternal life with God through him but he also touched our bodies and healed us and fed us and cared about how our lives were here and now. (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017)

Some participants shared the response of care in various ways, like Cornell who noted care stemming from “using . . . the talents and the abilities and the experience God has given me to make a difference” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017) and Felicia, who shared her “love for this planet” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). Finally, Stan expressed a deep-seeded belief in the work:
I just really deeply believe in it, I mean, it comes from my personal values of wanting to make positive contributions in the world and do what I can do to help people to, give them the opportunities to improve their own lives and the skills and then help people to organize. . . . I’ve gained a lot of practical experience and seen a lot of practical examples over the years of how this does work somehow it convinced and try not to be, you know, ideological about it but very practically convinced about that this does work and can be supported and is necessary at a level of the health of our society and people and the future of our planet, necessary work that needs to be done and I also believe that we have something to contribute to that in terms of our practical skills and experience and we’re trying to do our best to contribute it. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)

Emotional arousal through a response of care reflected the emergent motivation to act in the best interest of the recipient through the work and services provided through their organization.

**Objective 3**

Objective three explored the competencies needed for executive leadership within an international agricultural development NGO. Following the individual participant analysis, significant statements were separated in an excel spreadsheet by objective. From the 72 initial significant statements for objective three, 61 of the significant statements resulted in the emergence of nine themes: vision and organizational context, strategic thinking, trust and transparency, cultural insight, people management, building awareness, fundraising, technical competency, and adaptive learning (Table 4-3).

**Vision and Organizational Context**

The first theme to emerge regarding competencies needed for international agricultural development NGO executive leaders was vision and organizational context. Reflecting on competencies needed, Matt shared, “I would say it really depends on . . . the mission of the organization, and it depends a lot on the sectors or the multiple
sectors of what you’re going for” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). Stuart commented on the pertinence of organization size to competencies needed within the position:

> I think it varies fairly dramatically, depending on the size of the organization. . . . Now, being bigger, we can afford to have experts on staff in each of those areas, and people who are better fundraisers than I ever was, and people who are better in every aspect. . . . So there are a lot of skills, but I think it -- I think that there’s a progression, depending on whether you're a $200,000 organization, a $2 million organization, or a $10 million organization, which of those become most important. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

For all sizes of organizations, Felicia expressed, “Having a strong vision and a willingness to stick with it through all the ups and downs. A strong enough passion for what you’re doing I think is really critical” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). Rachel echoed, “Visionary is important, but in my particular management style I think that it’s almost more important to have staff that is visionary and support them and so empowering is [also] important” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Vision and organizational context enable leaders to create a pathway for growth and impact through the organization’s mission and services. However, limited resources often call for executive leaders to be strategic in their thinking to best serve the organization and its constituents with their current resources.

**Strategic Thinking**

The second theme to emerge from the data was strategic thinking. Seven of the twelve participants emphasized strategic thinking as a key competency for executive NGO leaders. Dale shared his rationale for this important competency:

> Being strategic because the scope of the need . . . can be overwhelming and if you're going to have impact, you need to know what you’re going to say yes to, what you’re going to say no to and how to focus your efforts. . . . And I think that’s a huge thing, being strategic in terms of utilizing,
focusing, mobilizing whatever resources we have. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

“Understanding the big picture” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017) and “management oversight” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017) were also noted by Stuart and Randell respectively as reminiscent of this overarching theme of strategic thinking. Rochelle echoed:

I’d say strategic thinking and thinking beyond your own organization. Looking at that big picture and really being able to see what piece you play in that broader solution. I think it’s really easy to fall into the trap of thinking you’ve got to take on everything, but knowing what your role is and how to maximize against that I think is really important. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Finally, strategic thinking took on the breadth of planning and direction for Mark as he noted, “I would say overall leadership ability, team leadership, strategic planning, strategic direction, getting folks all headed in the same direction organizationally, being an organization that solicits feedback from other organizations in a collaborative environment” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Strategic thinking provides an outlet for leaders to connect the organization’s vision, mission, values, and services in an intentional manner to best serve others while continuing to grow leaders within and the organization as a whole. Yet, without trust and transparency, a leader’s strategic ideas cannot be communicated effectively to accomplish the organization’s mission.

**Trust and Transparency**

The third theme to emerge from the data was trust and transparency. Five of the twelve participants communicated the importance of trust and transparency within NGO executive leader roles. Randell shared:

In a nonprofit it’s such a different level of accountability and transparency to not just a board of directors or investors or whatever, it is everybody. It’s the entire body of the general public has the right to look at my books
and hold me accountable for how we manage donated funds. (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017)

Stan echoed:

I think another competency that’s extremely important is again my type of international partnership role is relationship building and trust building and just, you know, is really essential in terms of, yeah, building a positive organizational culture and positive relationships of trust which I think go a long way towards allowing us to work together and succeed together and overcome challenges and problems. (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017)

Trust and transparency are essential elements within the on-profit sector to create a deep awareness of the work being accomplished through the investments others entrust to the organization. Insights to the cultural contexts in which the organization works also enable the executive leader to make informed decisions about the work they set out to do.

Cultural Insight

The next theme to emerge from the data was cultural insight. Five of twelve participants shared various perspectives on the importance of cultural insight to their role as an executive NGO leader. Casey emphasized, “Cross-cultural skills are, of course, essential for any group working overseas to be able to read a culture and know how to work within that culture” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). Felicia stressed the role of listening to cultural insight:

I think I came to really appreciate the importance of listening to local people and really making sure that any work being done is work that they want and that fits with their lives and their goals. And that any project that comes in and then says okay, now we’re all going to do this, is not going to last long-term. I think that was one of the key pieces... just the importance of listening. (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017)

Cornell echoed, “Ask questions and listen... we need to help people help themselves... it's a hand-up instead of a hand-out kind of mentality” (Personal Communication,
February 3, 2017). He also provided an example of the harm that can come when cultural insight is not garnered before making a decision:

There was a man before I made that first trip to Honduras and we were building a children’s home. So when he went, he saw that the Hondurans were mixing concrete on the ground. They were just taking shovels and adding the sand and gravel and this and that and just mixing it with shovels. And he determined what would really be helpful would be a concrete mixer. So he bought this $7,000 concrete mixer on a trailer, rubber tires, diesel engine to power it. He paid $7,000 for it. I went two years later on a trip and that diesel-powered concrete mixer was in the shed. It had never been used and guess what the Hondurans were doing? Mixing concrete on the ground. So he thought that was important. That was something they needed. But they didn't think they needed it and so it wasn't getting used. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Felicia shared, “They had the knowledge and the resources to do the job” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017); Randell noted, “we really insist on whatever we do being attainable and sustainable at the family level by the poorest people on earth” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Finally, Rachel simply reiterated why listening is integral to development work, “Understanding the local community is important” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Cultural insight provides essential perspectives for leaders to root their decision making processes in for programming and actions impacting each community. Understanding and creating a culture within the organization creates common frameworks and expectations for better people management.

People Management

Another theme to emerge from the significant statement for objective three was people management. Seven of twelve participants mentioned the competency of people management as important to their role as an executive NGO leader. Cornell emphasized the relational aspect of international development work, “We say it’s not
about the plan or the project, it's about the people. . . . I think that's leadership—you want to get things done but you have to remember what's important is the people” (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017). Rachel noted, “I think that [emotional intelligence] really helps to be able to read a room” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017).

Additionally, Dale articulated the importance of volunteers within the context of people management, “It’s a big job to manage and utilize that many volunteers appropriately and effectively, but it’s a privilege as well and we couldn’t do what we do without that kind of volunteer engagement” (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017). Finally, though multiple participants noted the importance of people management regarding staffing, Stan emphasized, “good practices and being able to hire and manage the right people and make sure those things [financial oversight, management oversight, etc.] are in place” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Without people management, organizational growth would be limited; such a competency is integral to an executive leader creating an environment others desire to work within. Managing others, however, requires a deep awareness of self and ability to create awareness about the work the organization is doing.

**Building Awareness**

The sixth theme to emerge from the data was building awareness. Half of the participants stressed aspects of self-awareness, communication, and networking as imperative competencies for executive NGO leaders. As the executive leader, Stuart emphasized that you are the “public face of the organization” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017); it is imperative to know yourself. Felicia shared:

> It’s very helpful to have an understanding of your strengths and your weaknesses and the ability to bring in people to complement you in leadership for the organization. So knowing—sometimes it’s hard to know
what you don’t know, but it’s very helpful. The sooner you figure that out, the better. (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017)

Stan reflected on the importance of building awareness of the organization’s work with various people as a key competency, “I think being able to present your case to different audiences” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Rochelle echoed, “I think communication is critical. . . . being able to share the ideas and the learnings and the learnings effectively” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). Additionally, Dale emphasized:

We take seriously our responsibility to communicate the realities of the work that we do, not only the reality of the impact that we’re seeing, but we present people that we’re serving around the world in a way that gives them the dignity they’re due that doesn’t kind of exploit them to have an emotional impact or purpose. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017).

Finally, Rochelle noted, “I think networking is also really valuable” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). Self-awareness, communication, and networking enable executive leaders to build greater awareness of the work as a key face of the organization. A strong profile enables the leader to pursue various opportunities for financial support of the organization.

**Fundraising**

The next theme to emerge was fundraising. A third of the participants stressed the role of fundraising as an executive NGO leader. Stan simply stated, “Fundraising is absolutely essential” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Stuart emphasized:

You can't hide from fundraising, so you'd better have some aptitude for it if you want to be an executive director, either that or love to chase government grants, I guess, in which case you're going to do what the government wants you to do and not what you want to do. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)
Matt shared the challenging aspects of fundraising within international agricultural development, “We also end up needing to find donors that are a little bit more risk tolerant because in agriculture sometimes it rains too much and sometimes it doesn’t rain at all and stuff gets flooded or dies, and you’ve got to replant” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). Finally, Cornell shared the importance of personal stories for fundraising:

Get their name. Get their picture. Get their quote. I guess that's part of leadership training. I'm training them and obviously if you want people to donate to help you do this, if I just say well we trained over 4,000 people. We did 93 workshops in 13 countries, that sounds impressive but that really doesn't touch people's hearts like it does if you've got the person's picture and their name and they tell you how it changed their life and what it did for their family. That's what touches people. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

Fundraising is an essential competency for executive leaders to continue the work of their organization. A growing understanding of various technical aspects of the organization’s work can also aid in communicating the impact of the work to donors.

**Technical Competency**

The eighth theme to emerge from the data was technical competency. This theme was approached by four of the twelve participants. Stuart reflected on the competencies needed and responded regarding the agricultural aspect of the organization:

I think, in general, understanding the big--and this is a place where I struggle a little bit, but understanding the big picture . . . you can go and you can learn how to use pre-manures in cover crops, but how does that fit into the global food system? Who are the big players? What are the relative roles and strengths of high-end commercialized agriculture as opposed to smallholder agriculture? How did a group of small holders in, you know, on marginalized land in, you know, in Burundi fit into that global picture? You know, I think all that, to me, has always been both confusing as well as, an area that I need to understand. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)
Casey also shared, “We all have our strengths and weaknesses and gifting in different places. . . Of course, well-trained in whatever their specific field is” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). Matt echoed of the complexity of agricultural development work, “Agriculture and the number of possibilities are kind of endless as far as what’s there” (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017). Finally, Stan noted the role of experiential learning for technical competency, “I don’t have technical training as an agronomist . . . so I don’t know if that makes me unique or not, but I’ve got a ton of accumulative experience” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). However gained, technical competency allows for strong communication both within and outside of the organization regarding its agricultural foundations and purposes. Learning technical and organizational aspects of international agricultural development also requires leaders to be adaptive.

Adaptive Learning

The final theme to emerge within the data for objective three is adaptive learning. Eight of the twelve participants noted competencies relevant to this theme. Randell expressed the importance of learning and adapting a deep understanding of worldview:

I think one of the most critical competencies would be a worldview that sees humanity as a whole . . . the ability to see or work beyond or around or within the differences and accepting differences, focusing on similarities, making those connections, you know, where there is understanding because there’s going to be a lot of areas where there’s not. The ability to relate to other people who are different from you in a way that still communicates on a level that’s beneficial for both people. (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017)

Felicia added to this competency, “Open-mindedness. The ability to shift as new situations dictate and new opportunities dictate” (Personal Communication, March 23,
The contextual, adaptive needs of international agricultural development were emphasized by Matt:

> Every situation is different. And so each place kind of has to figure it out on their own, and so, that's a very different mentality as far as leadership goes because we go into a place and we say, yes, it's kind of more open. (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Within these changing contexts, being teachable was also noted by Dale:

> Being a learner because while there's some base realities that are pretty consistent, there are a lot of things that change and our understandings of them change. . . . I think continuing always to learn and be open to learning, being humble about what we know and what we don’t know and what the people that we seek to serve and partner with know and don’t know. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Adaptive learning for leaders within international agricultural development, like Rachel, also calls for the “ability to take risks but without too [many] risks” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Another participant echoed:

> [It] takes a different leadership style because in our sector, I have to be a bit more like, 'Yes. This is the right thing to do but I'm not going to guarantee for you that you'll have a great result this year or even next year or the next year. It may take three years. It may take five years.' There's a chance it may never happen. So that's a different sort of style, I think, as far as leadership goes. And neither is right or wrong or bad or worst. It's just different, right? (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Additionally, adaptive learning encompassed managing stress, as well as “bringing together diverse groups who have a common area of interest to try and figure out how to work effectively together” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). She added, “Humility I think is big, too. I came into this role not knowing anything about global development, quite frankly, and I've learned a tremendous amount . . . not thinking you know it all because none of us ever know it all in this space” (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017). Alan echoed:
You have got to lay pride aside. That’s a hard thing to do. Probably the biggest sin that we as human beings face which you really—you cannot make it about you. It’s got to be about the organization. It’s got to be about the mission statement of whatever you’re trying to do. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017)

Adaptive learning enables executive leaders to make leadership adjustments in challenging situations, keeping multiple stakeholders in mind to best determine actions and endeavors for the organization.

**Objective 4**

Objective four inquired of the challenges faced by executive NGO leaders within international agricultural development. Following the individual participant analysis, significant statements were separated in an excel spreadsheet by objective. Data was analyzed by a manual sorting process of the significant statements. Seven themes emerged from the 88 initial significant statements for objective four: leadership expectations, people management, resource management, board development, communication, agricultural development awareness, and succession (Table 4-4).

**Leadership Expectations**

The first theme to emerge regarding challenges faced by international agricultural development NGO executive leaders was leadership expectations. Half of the participants shared challenged related to leadership expectations. Matt shared the challenge of expectations that call for the executive leader to hold the answers and fix the problems that arise:

There’s a tendency to want to set up a CEO or a political leader as sort of the answer person or the go-to person for everything, and that happens in non-profits a lot, much like it happens I think in government, and I think that that’s ultimately kind of dangerous because you end up with people that have to act like they have all the answers, and they don’t. Nobody does. . . . There’s a general sense that not-for-profits are going to take care of somebody. They’re going to fix it. And so, there’s sort of this
inherent paternalistic expectation that I think is a huge problem. And so, it lends itself towards more paternalistic sounding or seeming leadership, which I actually think is detrimental both as a sustainability organization and the effectiveness of the work that gets done. (Personal Communication, April 20, 2017)

Another executive leader, Mark, noted, “Probably the biggest challenge is the balance of all those pieces that are necessary” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). In that attempted balance, Rachel echoed, “I think that that’s one of my things that I am frustrated by is that there are so many different things I’m working on that . . . it’s difficult to do that because I never get to finish anything” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). Randell shared the need for thick skin with relationships, “And there’re going to be people who disagree with you very strongly, and regardless of what your heart intent was relationships break and that’s just a part of it” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Stan illustrated the sense of continuous learning as, “building the airplane as you’re flying” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Others expressed the challenges of managing growth and change within their organizations. The expectation of continued growth, learning, and sharing of knowledge was shared by Dale:

One of the big challenges is often there’s people learning stuff all the time, of course, the most significant learning is what doesn’t work, but they’re also learning what does work and the tragedy is often times that information, that knowledge doesn’t get out to anybody else who can benefit from it so everybody keeps doing the same thing in different places. So if we can be a conduit of those lessons learned and kind of verify them, capture that knowledge or that experience in a way that makes it accessible to a broader base of people, then we can disseminate it. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Finally, Rachel reflected on the challenge of shifting time commitment expectations for executive NGO leaders:
I think that there’s a shift in what we’re willing to do and that’s good, you know, like that’s like important for family dynamics and important for like holistic self-care and things like that, and so I think like in the broader sphere like those people--like my grandparents are all missionaries and they just worked all the time . . . I don’t see our generation being like that. (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017)

Managing leadership expectations is a significant challenge for executive leaders, considering the numerous responsibilities, realistic capacities for an individual, and public role as the face of the organization. Yet, keeping these expectations in order enables the leader to best face the challenges of managing a diverse array of people engaged with the organization.

**People Management**

The next theme to emerge from the data was people management. Eight of the twelve participants expressed challenges related to people management, including both staff and volunteers. Dale articulated this challenge of people management well:

I’d say one of the biggest ones anytime you’re in leadership is kind of nurturing, paying attention to emotional intelligence and where people are and what they’re dealing with and how they work and how to support and encourage them and challenge them to get the most out of them and also make the opportunities the most rewarding for them . . . how to communicate and work with the leadership and the staff to encourage them to step forward and be willing to put in that extra effort and take those embrace those risks as opportunities to expand the impact and work that they do care passionately about . . . figuring out how to honor the motivations and the deeper desires of people . . . [while] nurturing the health of the organization. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Casey noted, “There were significant challenges in helping people grow into the roles that they’ve already assumed. . . . Helping them see where they’re doing things well but wherever there’s room for improvement and trying to guide that process” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). International agricultural development brings a dynamic of local staff in various countries, of which Stuart shared such challenges:
When we start working a new country, we’ll hire a local executive director and help them to hire their staff and set up a local board of directors. As such, they’re independent, so they don’t directly work for us. So the balancing act is improving quality, enforcing standards, but not doing it in a top-down, impositional way. So that’s a huge leadership challenge. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Casey also expressed the challenge regarding commitment with this generation of rising agricultural development leaders, “I think we’re in an age right now where people feel like they can have the desire of long-term impact with short-term commitment” (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017). Finally, Mark discussed the challenge of ensuring quality staff development opportunities, “the challenge for me as a leader is what is good learning versus not good learning? What’s a waste of time versus a good use of time (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)?

Volunteer management was also a challenge discussed with participants; Randell noted, “Working with volunteers is very, very different than working with employees. It takes a lot more time and energy to produce less outcome” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Cornell shared the challenge, yet importance of training volunteers for the work of the organization:

The people I take with me, I have to educate them as best I can of what to expect and how to treat the people and again, the idea of be a good listener and ask questions . . . things like that are part of the leadership challenge that I don’t really think about . . . Some of the things that I’ve learned in 20 years to try to help them not make the mistakes I have. (Personal Communication, February 3, 2017)

People management reflected both employees and volunteers; a significant challenge for executive leaders exists in managing the expectations for these valuable representatives of the organization. While people are an essential resource to international agricultural development organizations, financial resources are also a key challenge faced by executive leaders.
Resource Management

The third theme to emerge from the data regarding challenges faced by executive NGO leaders was resource management. Half of the participants expressed challenges with resource management. Stan stressed, “The fundraising side is always critical” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). Randell expressed the potential for expanding their work with more funding:

We could really use some more funding. If we could, I mean we’ve got the structure in place, we have the materials developed, we have the message developed, we’ve got the people in place. If we add more money to this, it just goes out to more people. (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017)

Limited resources are a challenge for many NGOs, as noted by Rochelle:

Capacity for the organization based on limited resources. That’s probably something you’ve heard from almost everybody you’ve talked to is that any time you’ve got a nonprofit in a mission that you’re trying to accomplish and limited resources in which to do that, you can’t do everything you want to do. So it’s just figuring out how can we maximize our impact given that we don’t have all of the resources and manpower that we’d like to try and drive harder, faster, more. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Also, Stuart noted that limited resources also impact morale and growth opportunities:

How do we keep people encouraged when there's not enough money to do what we want to do. That's another one that's been a constant challenge. . . . [There are] a lot of people with ag development backgrounds that would like to work here, and I need five fundraisers for every ag specialist. It might even be a higher ratio than that, but that's, you know, that's a tough thing. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Managing those limited resources can also be a challenge, as expressed by Rachel, “For me that was hard because I wasn’t very likable, you know, but it was also really necessary for us to be sustainable” (Personal Communication, May 2, 2017). It is also an area that many, including Alan, are trying to work on, “Now the fundraising piece, for us, that’s a place where we’re now working on getting a really strong” (Personal
Communication, March 24, 2017). In a competitive market, resource management
reflects an ongoing challenge and need to responsibly utilize funds and other resources
entrusted to the organization. These organizational resources are entrusted to both the
executive leader and the organization’s board, thus making board development a
challenge and need for organizational progress.

**Board Development**

The next theme to emerge from the data was board development. Four of the
twelve participants connected with the challenges of board development. Stan shared:

> Board development and board interface . . . I feel like that’s a gap for me
> and I feel like, you know, with a board interface, with different board
> members and board chairs I work with more closely, individual feedback,
support, recommendations at that level but as a broader [organization] I
> don’t think we’ve done as well as we could. (Personal Communication,
> February 7, 2017)

Stuart noted the challenge of training and developing the board for effective service,

> “Now how do we train that board? How do we make sure that they understand things
> like oversight, conflict of interest, etc., without coming in and dictating to them? So
> that's a huge challenge, probably one of the biggest” (Personal Communication,
> February 13, 2017). Board members are significant stakeholders and trustees of the
organization; executive leaders are faced with the challenge of ensuring each board
member understands the organization’s work and has a vested interest in its mission.
The board also shares responsibility with the executive leader for effectively
communicating their mission to others who may join in the organization’s meaningful
work.
Communication

The sixth theme to emerge from the data was communication. Six of the twelve participants shared challenges with communication in their role as an executive NGO leader. Rochelle articulated this challenge as:

Communication is definitely a challenge in the sense that I probably have a pretty good view on what's going on across the whole organization but helping to make sure that the whole team understands what their specific piece of it, but then to the broader mission and into the other work that's going on, helping to make sure that our members know about the wide range of things that we're engaged in, not just the one or two more specific activities that they might be working on directly with us. (Personal Communication, May 12, 2017)

Stan spoke to the challenge of communicating the overall direction of the organization, “Developing, you know, a clear, strategic plan and getting all the different actors in the organization from the board to the staff to the partners around the world bought into and excited about, you know, the direction of the organization” (Personal Communication, February 7, 2017). The importance of communication toward a shared vision was expressed well by Felicia as, “Keeping everybody on the same page. . . Because we all come from these different backgrounds and sort of different expectations about how this work is done” (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017). While a great challenge, communication is an essential area for executive leaders to continue improving upon to ensure the sustainability of their organization. As leaders in international agricultural development, communication of the organization’s work may also encompass creating a greater awareness of the broader field of agricultural development.

Agricultural Development Awareness

The next theme that emerged regarding leadership challenges faced by executive NGO leaders was agricultural development awareness. Ten of the twelve
participants shared challenges within this theme. Building awareness of the need for long-term agricultural development was expressed by Casey:

> Getting people to realize that short-term is a good start but it doesn’t end there to really have that long-term impact . . . We’re really working with people, and it’s about relationships and those relationships can’t be developed overnight. They take oftentimes years to really give the trust that we need at times. (Personal Communication, April 7, 2017)

Concern regarding the value for longevity within agricultural development was also shared as a challenge among executive leaders, as articulated by Dale:

> Recognizing the value of building the capacity of the organization and having something that has a sustaining impact that’s much bigger than any person or cause. I think that’s a constant challenge and I think it’s a particular one, right these days. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Awareness of the logistical challenges related to agricultural development work was expressed by Mark, “Our work is specifically in the remote, isolated communities . . . Agriculture represents food security. It represents economy. It represents so many parts of our work and the logical challenges of getting helpful resources there is probably the greatest challenge” (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017). Additional leadership challenges faced by participants included understanding the various influences into the poverty cycle, as well as numerous challenges that come with working across cultures within agricultural development.

Creating awareness of agricultural development work also encompassed the evaluation and measurement of progress in development work; Mark reflected further on this challenge:

> When I entered into the non-profit world and kingdom work and I started to say what does success look like for us? What’s the bulls’ eye? How do we know when we’ve hit it? How do we know that we haven’t hit it? What kind of adjustments do we make? All of that. I got a lot of sideways looks. That
Stuart focused on the challenge of measurement created from agricultural development work:

That has been an interesting challenge, I think, in that typically when you’re measuring changes in yields, you’re measuring a single crop, you know, what’s your change in your maize crop or whatever. What we’re doing, because we’re trying to focus on things like agroforestry and we’re trying to focus on diversity, you’re going from maybe one or two crops to a dozen, and so how do you measure that productivity change? And that’s more of a challenge. (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017)

Awareness practices, however, can result in stronger accountability and investment in agricultural development work, as shared by Mark:

From our staff to our field staff to our donors to our Board to church partners—everybody looked at that and they say wow. Okay. I get what they’re doing. I get that they’re measured. I get that they’re going to be accountable to what they say they’re going to do. It's not just big picture. It goes into detail with outputs and outcomes and specific deliverables. And that has really—that’s been the loudest voice for us of all of those different stakeholders saying okay. I get it. And I’m investing because they’re going to be accountable. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)

Though communication, logistics, evaluation and measurement of progress, building awareness is a challenge, it is also an essential task for executive leaders in international agricultural development. Broader awareness creates opportunities for others who may not otherwise engage in agricultural development to do so, which may also create connections for long-term investment and potential future leaders within the field.

**Succession**

The final theme that emerged from the data was succession. Eleven of the twelve participants addressed various challenges associated with leadership succession
within their organization or on a broader, industry scope. Dale reflected on the broader challenge of succession:

I think there has been a fair amount written about the generational transition that's happening in nonprofit leadership, lots of areas of leadership, not just, but I think it's more acute in the nonprofit sector. I think that's a real question and concern and is something that requires us to be more intentional about the development of the people within our organizations. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

Some of the challenges expressed reflected the concern of finding an executive leader with the right combination of experience and skills, as shared by Felicia:

I guess the biggest challenge I might see is finding leaders that both have the background in the agriculture piece, the on the ground, hands in the dirt background and the fundraising piece. I think it's hard . . . to find anybody who's good at all of those things. (Personal Communication, March 23, 2017)

Additionally, the passion for specific agricultural development work was also noted as a challenge and concern of succession, raised by Randell: “Will someone else rise up with enough passion for the precise thing we're doing or close enough to take over when our time is up? I don't know (Personal Communication, February 8, 2017). Yet, for a couple of participants like Stuart, the challenge has been mitigated by intentional work: “Succession, at one point, would've been a real problem. I don't think it's so much of a problem, but on the one hand, you know, I think we've got good processes, good procedures, good mid-level management” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). A final factor discussed regarding the leadership challenge of succession was the succession process, which Mark brought to light:

I think the greatest challenge in leadership succession is the current leader willing to pass that along successfully and actually set that leader up for success. And then stepping back and being willing to yield to their leadership, even though it might be different leadership or a different approach than the current leader might do. (Personal Communication, March 7, 2017)
Succession is a key challenge faced by executive leaders in international agricultural development organizations.

**The Essence of Leadership Development**

Moustakas (1994) noted, “The final step in the phenomenological research process is the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (p. 100). He also emphasized, “The essences of any experience are never totally exhausted. The fundamental textural-structural synthesis represents the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). The following reflects the essence of lived leadership development experiences of executive leaders in international agricultural development.

Leadership development within the context of international agricultural development was experienced by executive NGO leader participants through various past professional and educational paths, all preparing individuals with relevant competencies and experiences for their current leadership role. Participants shared many formative experiences that directed their interests to the international agricultural development arena. Mentoring also played an integral role in participants’ leadership development. Current practices for continued leadership development rely heavily on self-directed learning. Though an expressed desire for mentoring within the executive role, executive leadership development is primarily pursued through establishing a support network of trusted colleagues and peers. Leadership development practices are reciprocated through various opportunities offered to rising staff leaders to empower
and encourage further development, as well as the next generation of leaders through internships.

Through the lens of leadership cognitions and personal factors, self-efficacy for the executive NGO leader is integrated through numerous sources of performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Prior professional and personal experiences enabled contributing performance accomplishments toward positive, efficacious leadership development belief. Learning through colleagues and mentors provided vicarious experiences that brought belief for taking on unknown arenas. Verbal persuasion from trusted sources encouraged leadership development. Formative and inspiring interactions aroused emotive responses of care and encouragement for the multiplication of leadership and work for their organizations. Efficacious beliefs integrated for executive NGO leaders to boldly step forward with their organizations to create an impact.

Through the lens of leadership behaviors, relevant competencies for executive NGO leadership development were explored. Adaptability to the varying contexts of international agricultural development work is an imperative competency for leaders to develop; approaching such potentially high-risk contexts with an attitude of humility and willingness to learn aids executive leaders in understanding and leading an organization vested in development work. Strategic thinking regarding the complexity of work in international agricultural development, as well as building awareness of the organization’s work with multiple audiences can heighten the reach of the organization’s work and fundraising efforts. Essential to the executive NGO leader role are competencies of people management, including local and global staff and volunteers.
Through the lens of the leadership environment, pertinent leadership challenges for executive NGO leaders impact the opportunities and obstacles toward executive leadership development. Concerns around succession, including developing leaders for the unique combination of experiences and competencies needed for international agricultural development organizations and the passion to work within the NGO sector, create intentional effort toward developing leaders and ensuring transitional plans are established. The complexity of agricultural development work influences the time availability for leadership development, as the need is great for executive NGO leaders to strengthen the awareness of organizational work through effective communication and evaluation of impact. In light of personal leadership development for executive NGO leaders, the people management aspect of the position reflects the reciprocal nature of responsibilities; leading others requires time and resources to invest in staff and volunteers to ensure the smooth operation of the organization.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 4 detailed the findings for each research objective. Objective one explored the textural description of the phenomenon of leadership development experiences of executive NGO leaders in international agricultural development. The structural description of the phenomenon was explored through the remaining three objectives; (2) identify self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences, (3) executive NGO leadership competencies, and (4) executive NGO leadership challenges. Findings were reported based upon identified themes and subthemes within the respective objective. Finally, the composite essence was shared.
### Table 4-1. Objective 1 Themes and Related Subthemes

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Professional Experiences</td>
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<td>Development</td>
<td>Educational Experiences</td>
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<td>Mentoring Experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Leadership</td>
<td>Self-directed Learning</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Formal Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>On-the-job Experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring Needs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishing a Community or Network</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>Empowerment of staff and others toward</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices for Future Leaders</td>
<td>Opportunities for the next generation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4-2. Objective 2 Themes and Related Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Related Subthemes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance Accomplishments</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Experience</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Persuasion</td>
<td>Spiritually-based persuasion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholder-based persuasion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Arousal</td>
<td>Multiplication of impact</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responding with care</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 4-3. Objective 3. Executive NGO Leader Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision and Organizational Context</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust and Transparency</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Insight</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Awareness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Competency</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Learning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Expectations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Management</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
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<td>Board Development</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Development Awareness</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Succession</td>
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CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of leadership development experiences by NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

2. Identify the structural essence of self-efficacy expectations influences on leadership development experiences of organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development;

3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development; and

4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment for organizational executive leaders in international agricultural development.

Chapter 2 presented Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory as the theoretical framework for this study and explored supporting literature from McCormick’s (2001) social cognitive model of leadership and Paglis and Green’s (2002) leadership self-efficacy model to frame the proposed Conceptual Model of Mediating Practices for Executive NGO Leader Development within International Agricultural Development. Literature and empirical studies pertinent to the elements of leader self-efficacy, relevant competencies, and mentoring within the conceptual model were explored to provide additional context. The chapter was concluded by literature and empirical studies related to challenges in international agricultural development, the role of non-government organizations in international agricultural development, and leadership in non-government organizations. Chapter 3 presented the selected methodology and design of this research study. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth
interviews with executive leaders of NGOs working in international agricultural development. Chapter 4 explored the findings from the study. Chapter 5 offered a discussion of key findings, implications and recommendations.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, which were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Upon completion of data collection, transcriptions were analyzed for significant statements regarding the phenomenon of leadership development. Significant statements were identified within individual transcripts for each objective of the study. Significant statements were reviewed to assign a meaning unit or cluster, then reduced to have a non-repetitive list for each participant, a process also known as horizontalization. Individual data were reviewed and summarized to encompass each participant’s textural and structural essence of the phenomenon. The individual summary and transcription was provided to each participant for a member check. Significant statements were then compiled by objective for additional review to synthesize common themes to describe the composite textural and structural essence of the phenomenon.

Findings in Chapter 4 indicated that leadership development within the context of international agricultural development was experienced by executive NGO leader participants through various past professional and educational paths, which prepared participants with relevant competencies and experiences for their current leadership role. Participants shared many formative experiences that directed their interests to the international agricultural development arena. Mentoring also played an integral role in participants’ leadership development. Current practices for continued leadership development rely heavily on self-directed learning. Though an expressed desire for
mentoring within the executive role, executive leadership development is primarily pursued through establishing a support network of trusted colleagues and peers. Leadership development practices are reciprocated through various opportunities offered to rising staff leaders to empower and encourage further development, as well as the next generation of leaders through internships.

Through the lens of leadership cognitions and personal factors, self-efficacy for the executive NGO leader is integrated through numerous sources of performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Through the lens of leadership behaviors, relevant competencies for executive NGO leadership development included adaptability, people management, strategic thinking, and building awareness. Through the lens of the leadership environment, pertinent leadership challenges for executive NGO leaders, such as succession, agricultural development awareness, and people management, impact the opportunities and obstacles toward executive leadership development.

**Key Findings**

Key findings are discussed through the conceptual model for this study. Significant statements for each objective were analyzed for themes and also clustered into subthemes when appropriate. Data analysis followed Creswell’s (2013) prescribed method (adapted from Moustakas, 1994) for transcendental phenomenological reduction, which included analysis of individual participant experiences with the phenomenon, then the collective to identify the composite textural and structural essence of leadership development. Based upon the foundation of the conceptual model being one of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986; McCormick, 2001), the
analyzed data were also reviewed for key interactions. Three key findings emerged from the analysis.

**Leadership Experiences**

Objective one explored the leadership development experiences of NGO executive leaders from a textural perspective, and objective two further examined the structural means of leadership development. Past leadership experience, gained through a diverse and broad array of mastery experiences, was integral to the leadership development of current executive NGO leaders. Experiences such as community leadership roles, work within other non-profit organizations, and teaching demonstrate the influence of past experiences on leadership development efficacy (Reichard, et al., 2017). These multiple, varied experiences can lead to a place within international agricultural development work (Suarez, 2010).

While direct or mastery experiences are the strongest influencer of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997), indirect sources of efficacy expectations (vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal) also played a pivotal role in vocational, efficacious belief (Anderson & Betz, 2001). Though interactions and experiences of various natures brought formative and meaningful leadership development experiences along participants’ journeys to the executive leadership role and impacting their integrative efficacy beliefs to tackle the complex challenges of international agricultural development, current practices reflected a strong impact of experiential learning for continued leadership development within their role of an executive NGO leader.

Within the executive NGO leadership role, current practices of leadership development reflected primarily self-directed and experiential learning opportunities.
Self-directed practices reflected a heavy reliance on reading as a form of leadership development. Key findings regarding leadership experience practices reflected the primary means of learning for CEOs as experiential, although other self-directed and formal opportunities can contribute to learning (Sherlock & Nathan, 2007). Practices for leadership development should also balance the perception of immediate access and availability with long-term developmental benefits (Day & Dragoni, 2015). Participants noted various factors impacting their continued development, including time and other pressing priorities; yet, collectively, participants emphasized the need to exemplify continued leadership development to stay current with the needed competencies to face the complex challenges within international agricultural development.

**Relevant Competencies**

Competencies, or the knowledge, skills, and abilities, needed to lead within the context of international agricultural development reflected the unique leadership challenges of executive NGO leaders (Hannah, et al., 2008; Walumbwa, et al., 2005). Though prior research addressed competencies needed for entry-level, doctoral-level, and project managers in international agricultural development work, (Brière, et al., 2015; Conner, et al., 2013; Shinn, et al. 2009), minimal research was found regarding executive leaders within the NGO context (McCann & Kowalski, 2015). Participants shared numerous competencies needed, including adaptive learning, people management, strategic thinking, fundraising, and cultural insight, among others. However, Stuart emphasized, “There’s a lot of skills, but I think it that there’s a progression, depending on whether you’re a $200,000 organization, a $2 million organization, or a $10 million organization, which of those become most important” (Personal Communication, February 13, 2017). Though organizational size may be a
factor regarding a leader’s level of responsibilities, tackling the complex challenges of poverty and hunger requires leaders to have a toolbox of competencies in which to adaptively draw form for various situations and decision making processes (Machida & Schoubrroeck, 2011; Runge, 2015; Walumbwa, et al., 2005).

Another key finding of this study was the link between identified competencies needed and identified challenges of leadership within international agricultural development. Complex challenges, such as hunger and poverty, that are being addressed through international agricultural development organizations requires leadership competencies that encourage and facilitate collaboration and partnership between decision makers and field personnel (Kristjanson, et al., 2009; Naylor, 2011). Participants articulated numerous challenges faced within their respective organizational contexts and personal roles, including leadership expectations, people management, resource management, and agricultural development awareness. Such challenges reflected numerous needed competencies for leaders, like trust and transparency, building awareness, and vision and organizational context. Mastering the integration of leadership development as adaptive competencies to reflect the challenges faced within the leadership environment could provide a critical and strategic evaluation of the role of NGOs in addressing broader challenges (Jamali, 2003; McMichael & Schneider, 2011). Finally, a significant challenge for executive NGO leaders reflected the planning and preparation for leadership succession, which will be addressed through the mediating factor of mentoring.

Mentoring

In objective one, participants noted the significant role of mentors throughout their past leadership development experiences. Additionally, objective two deepened
the understanding of a mentor’s impact through vicarious learning. Increasing leader efficacy through a mentoring relationship has impacted motivation to lead, and is integral to continued leadership development (Lester, et al., 2011). Yet, increased efficacy does not necessarily translate to practice (Reichard, et al., 2017). Although mentoring played a significant role in the participants’ leadership development on their journey the executive leadership role, the presence of mentoring became more challenging in the executive role.

A significant shift occurred in the participants’ responses from reflecting upon mentor influence to the influence of a peer network. While mentoring has remained an important factor for some participants, it also became one of greater intention and inclusive of a network. Peer networks enable connection for leaders facing similar challenges and contexts, thus opportunities for improved leadership self-efficacy and collaborative efforts to address complex challenges (Mercier, 2012; Siebert, et al., 2017). The executive leader plays a critical role to the success of the organization (Froelich, et al., 2011); thus, support of and continued development of the executive leader are essential for the continued success of the organization, as is planning for succession.

Succession was regularly discussed by participants, though varied in levels of concern regarding the challenge of identifying future leadership for their organization and within the industry. Alan reflected, “I believe that always looking to train someone up in case someone leaves, in case someone passes, in case something happens, you’re always looking straight up another leader” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2017). Intentional effort for leadership development can help alleviate the growing
leadership gap within the NGO sector (Carman, Leland, & Wilson, 2010; Froelich, et al., 2011; Suarez, 2007). Yet, more action is needed to address succession challenges (Santora, et al, 2015; Bozer, Kuna, & Santora, 2015). Participants shared various opportunities for staff development and the investment into the future generation of development workers through internships; however, current executive leaders should reflect upon the impact of mentors in their own lives and leadership development experiences to enact practices that mediate the development of leaders with the passion and purpose for international agricultural development work.

**Implications**

The key findings of this study reflected the mediating factors identified within the conceptual model of this study; thus, implications are also discussed within the context of leadership experiences, relevant competencies, and mentoring. Current executive NGO leaders, rising executive NGO leaders, and others within the international agricultural development context should reflect on the implications of this study to determine beneficial practices to adopt. Additionally, leadership educators and leadership development professionals should observe the transferable elements of this study to their classrooms and practices. While findings of this study reflect the context of executive leaders in international agricultural development organizations, implications may be transferable to multiple contexts facing the common leadership gap with the retirement of the baby boom generation (Suarez, 2010). The dynamic challenges facing leaders today also merits transferability of the possibilities for new means of collaboration across government, non-profit, faith-based and for-profit organizations (Clarke & Ware, 2015; Raney & Raveloharimisy, 2016; Runge, 2015).
Leadership Experiences

Executive NGO leaders in this study demonstrated broad and diverse backgrounds in professional and personal leadership experiences, as well as their experiences with the phenomenon of leadership development. Leadership is a common interest for organizations, and leadership development is more about effectiveness and efficiency than any particular model (Day, et al, 2015). Various aspects of an individual’s life—education, religion, and familial experiences—contribute to an individual’s leadership in intercultural situations (Ambayec, 2011). The implications of such diverse backgrounds of executive NGO leaders, thus, are toward the experiences created for both developing leadership within a specific organization and onboarding a new executive leader. Participants noted the powerful experiences of gaining understanding through seeing the agricultural development work of their organizations first-hand; such accounts imply the need for onboarding new executive leaders through processes that include experiential introductions to various projects (Brière, et al., 2015; Runge, 2015, Sherlock & Nathan, 2007).

Participants’ responses regarding the benefits of experiential learning also implies that such learning opportunities are viable means of continued leadership development for current executive leaders. This key finding and implication supports the conceptual model of this study, which identified leadership experiences as a mediating factor between self-efficacy and leadership development. Also, participant experiences with the phenomenon implied that formative and hands-on experiences with the organizational work are integral to the executive leader’s belief in the work of the organization he or she leads and thus, their continued development to effectively serve.
The implications of experiential learning benefitting leadership development has transferable merit for leadership educators to engage students in such experiences, as well as leadership development professionals with their clients. Executive leaders taking the initiative to place themselves in new environments to learn also supports the findings of this study, which indicated the key role of self-directed leadership development practices. The self-directed nature of development at the executive level implies the need for leadership educators and leadership development practitioners to develop competencies and skills, such as critical thinking and adaptive learning, to enable such self-driven, continuous development as a leader. Self-directed leadership development also holds implications for specific efficacy in leadership development (Day, et al., 2014; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Reichard, et al., 2017).

**Relevant Competencies**

Previous research addressed competencies and knowledge areas relevant for entry-level and doctoral-level professionals, as well as project managers in international agricultural development (Brière, et al., 2015; Conner, et al., 2013; Shinn, et al., 2009). Identification of these common areas of competency relevant to executive NGO leaders has implications for leadership educators, leadership development professionals, and current leaders in the field regarding the development of internship experiences, rising leader training curriculum, and emphases of future executive leader gatherings within international agricultural development. Understanding the various competencies needed for executive leadership in international agricultural development has implications toward the development of best practices within the field (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). Additionally, participants noted the various overarching responsibilities associated with
their current executive leadership position; the scope of the organizational leader’s responsibilities has implications to the relevance and prioritization of various competencies. Finally, implications for further evaluation of competencies needed is reflected through the alignment of leadership competencies with the leadership challenges faced within international agricultural development. These two elements of competency and challenge should inform one another in the development of needed training and development practices, and support the conceptual model of this study, which presented relevant competencies as a mediating factor for leadership development to face the challenges within the leadership environment in international agricultural development.

**Mentoring**

Findings of this study indicate various roles of mentoring in executive NGO leader development experiences. Participants’ leadership development experiences through mentoring along their journey to executive leadership has implications for the overarching role of mentoring in leadership development. The minimal experiences with mentoring within participants’ current executive leadership roles, however, implies a lack of viable mentors or a viable structure for formal mentoring within international agricultural development at the executive level. Subsequently, participants emphasized the establishment of a peer community or network for continued leadership development; this implies a need for continued leadership development and a support structure to be developed and leveraged through umbrella organizations, such as The Accord Network, with trusted communities of executive leaders within similar contexts. Additionally, findings reflected executive NGO leaders’ experiences with leadership
development through developing the future generation of leaders (i.e. staff and interns).

Dale noted the delight of this practice:

> I love the challenges of an organization developing its capacity, expanding its impact, growing, we’ve got extraordinary people around here that know a lot of things a lot better than I do and so being able to give them opportunities and the support to exercise their gifts and abilities and as I mentioned earlier, kind of experience the benefit and the joy of doing that. Those are awesome things and to be given the opportunity to lead. (Personal Communication, March 6, 2017)

This reciprocal effort implies the need for executive NGO leaders to invest in the development of successors and leaders within the field of international agricultural development based upon their experiences and knowledge. Findings and implications of this study regarding mentoring support and reflect the conceptual model of this study, which noted mentoring as a mediating factor for leadership development. Given the leadership gap reaching across industries (Carman, et al., 2010; Santora, et al., 2015; Suarez, 2010; Tierney, 2006), mentoring has transferable implications for practice within the broader contexts of education and leadership development (Lester, et al., 2011; Reichard, et al, 2017; Siebert, et al., 2017).

**Recommendations for Executive NGO Leaders**

The following recommendations for executive NGO leaders reflect practices identified as beneficial for leadership development through this study:

- Be intentional about visiting the organization’s global work sites to obtain first-hand experiences within the specific cultural contexts.
- Other formalized leadership development opportunities should reflect experiential learning methods to maximize executive learning.
- Seek out mentors within the field, either peer or senior, to spur on leadership growth and build a trusted relationship for consistently discussing relevant accomplishments and challenges.
• Create a community of executive leaders willing to embrace leadership development accountability through a developed book reading network.

• Identify two or three potential rising leaders to consistently invest time in their leadership development.

**Recommendations for Leadership Educators**

The following recommendations for leadership educators reflect practices identified as beneficial for leadership development through this study:

• Develop critical thinking and adaptive skills in students toward the practice of continual leadership learning.

• Create opportunities for experiential learning through classroom engagement and service for practical application and practice of leadership concepts.

• Provide instruction in mentoring processes.

• Encourage students to seek out mentors within their desired career field.

• Utilize organizational leaders as guest speakers to assist students in connecting with professionals and understanding the leadership journey.

**Recommendations for Leadership Development Practitioners**

The following recommendations for leadership development practitioners reflect practices identified as beneficial for leadership development through this study:

• Create experiential based opportunities for connections to specific aspects of an individual’s organization or role.

• Encourage clients to seek out mentors in their field who are in an aspired leadership role.

• Encourage clients to seek out mentees to invest in within their career field or personal life.

• Challenge clients to discover opportunities for continued development through self-directed means or connecting into a professional network.

• Encourage leadership within a professional association to build a network of colleagues for consistent leadership development through a peer network.
Recommendations for Integrative Practice

In this section, the researcher focused on recommendations for integrative practice among executive NGO leaders, leadership educators, and leadership development practitioners. While individual strategies among each of these stakeholder communities will affect progress for leadership succession preparation, collective effort can strengthen and create a more efficient means of preparing the needed leaders within non-profits and throughout businesses, organizations, and education (Bozer, et al., 2015; Froelich, et al., 2011; Landles-Cobb, et al., 2015; Santora, et al., 2015). Just as Bandura’s (1986) model of reciprocal determinism and the conceptual model for this study demonstrated the interactive nature of personal, behavioral, and environmental elements, key stakeholders in leadership development (leadership educators, leadership development practitioners, executive NGO leaders) should interact in a reciprocal nature that is mutually beneficial. With shared resources, implementation of collaborative and integrative practices would serve as a model for partnership and effective means of strategic progress toward a common goal (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014; Raney & Raveloharimisy, 2016; UN, 2015). Each stakeholder should seek out potential partners or collaborators to build rapport, trust, and understanding of what each brings to the table for integrative practice.

The tendency for executive NGO leaders to engage in primarily self-directed leadership development provides opportunity for shared knowledge regarding key resources for personal reading. Engaging the Board of Directors for accountability and support of individualized development may minimize the potential for burnout (Carman, et al., 2010; Landles-Cobb, et al., 2015). Additionally, strategically recruiting a leadership educator or leadership development practitioner to serve as a member of the
organization’s Board of Directors could enhance the overall health of the organization, its current leaders, and preparation for leadership succession. A knowledgeable and supportive board will advocate for additional formal and experiential opportunities toward leadership development of the executive and rising leaders in the organization (Bozer, et al., 2015; Carman, et al., 2010; Froelich, et al., 2011; Landles-Cobb, et al., 2015; Sherman & Nathan, 2007).

Executive coaching, mentoring, and organizational advising practices also present numerous opportunities for leadership development collaborations among executives, educators, and practitioners. Leadership educators and executives should partner in research for informed methods of leadership development; partnership would encourage strategic and mutually beneficial work that would otherwise be a hindrance to one of the parties. Leadership educators could also engage executive NGO leaders or their organizations in strategic means for course examples, guest lectures, or hands-on experience for students to engage with a NGO for service-learning or creating custom leadership development tools; leadership development practitioners could serve as reviewers of the endeavor. Executive leaders could also engage leadership educators and practitioners through a strategic use of organizational meetings for key leadership development practices, as well as intentionally bringing a leadership development focused keynote to professional development conferences, executive retreats, etc. Utilizing the tendency to form networks or communities as a leadership development practice can be enhanced with intentional means of accountability for individual development plans (Froelich, et al., 2011; Landles-Cobb, et al., 2015; Sherman & Nathan, 2007).
Practitioners, educators, and executives should also partner to create a NGO Leader Academy; pursuit of grant funding for this endeavor would enable content expertise within international agricultural development, experiential learning opportunities to enhance the technical understanding of development work, and leadership development foundations to drive the overall experience, reflection, and professional application. Each stakeholder brings key information to the table to build competent leaders to face the complex, global challenges within international agricultural development in an efficient manner. This partnership would enable shared “on-the-job” experiences while also building a network for further mentoring and development in a formal leadership development setting; this 70/20/10 model reflects a best practice recommendation from the Center for Creative Leadership (Landles-Cobb, et al., 2015). This pursuit would also integrate all of the mediating factors for leadership development for further observation of the conceptual model of this study.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Considering the insights gleaned from this study, there are several opportunities for future research to explore various aspects of executive NGO leadership development within international agricultural development. While it did not emerge as a factor within this study, deepening the criterion sample to explore the impact of organizational size on leadership development experiences and practices would be recommended. Specific case studies within larger international agricultural development organizations could explore the leadership development experiences at multiple levels of leadership for various sized organizations. Additional participants could also add contextual understanding in further research regarding how the executive leader’s
scope of work and organization size impacts the competencies needed and challenges faced.

Self-efficacy expectations have a robust base of literature built upon Bandura’s (1977) seminal work. Leadership efficacy has also been established as an important area of research (Hannah, et al., 2008). However, numerous researchers have called for research of efficacy in specific contexts and the effectiveness of such constructs of self-efficacy (Andreson, et al., 2008; Haddad & Taleb, 2016; Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011; Petridou, Nicolaidou, & Karagiorgi, 2017; Reichard, et al., 2017; Siebert, et al., 2017). Given the broad and diverse leadership experience backgrounds of executive NGO leaders in this study, additional research is needed to understand the impact of various sources of efficacy and their integrative impact on leadership development practices. Further research is also needed to explore the potential positive implications of emotional arousal as a source of efficacy for executive NGO leaders in high stress environments (Bandura, 1977).

Additional research is needed to explore the connections between leadership development practices, leadership self-efficacy, and leader effectiveness. While leader efficacy has been explored through the interactive lenses of the leader, follower, and collective forms of efficacy, future research could look at how these interactive levels of efficacy overlay with the model of reciprocal determinism (behavior, environment, and personal factors) (Hannah, et al., 2008). Research regarding various interventions to positively impact leadership self-efficacy is also needed (Anderson, et al., 2008; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Walumbwam et al., 2005); this future research would also support further development of the conceptual model proposed in this study.
Mediating factors for leadership development can also be explored at the organizational level to determine best practices (Petridou, et al., 2017; Reichard, et al., 2017). Established best practices would also aid in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of various leadership development practices (Day, et al., 2014; Hervy & Gilboy, 2014).

Regarding competencies needed, this study focused on executive NGO leaders within international agricultural development. While other researchers have focused on competencies for entry-level, doctoral-level, and program management positions in international agricultural development (Brière, et al., 2015; Conner, et al., 2013; Shinn, et al., 2009), executive-level competencies within this context had not previously been explored. Additional research is needed to establish a consistent set of competencies needed for executive NGO leaders through quantitative research. Methodology such as the Delphi process utilized for the aforementioned studies which previously explored contextual competencies in international agricultural development could be affectively applied with executive leaders. Additionally, focus groups at various executive leadership retreats through supporting organizations could enable consensus to be built and collaborative effort engaged to best inform leadership development specialists and educators.

While intercultural competence has been extensively researched (Ambayec, 2011; Barrett, 2012; Deardorff, 2004), its value as a competence was not recognized within this study (Ambayec, 2011). Additional research is needed to determine the specific role of intercultural competence to the role of executive leader within an international agricultural development organization. Future research could also explore further the role of technical agricultural competence to the role of executive leader with
a factor of organizational size (Abo, et al., 2001; Barrett, 2012; Brière, et al., 2015; Runge, 2015; Sherlock & Nathan, 2007). Understanding these competencies is essential knowledge to international agricultural development professionals at all levels.

Considering the emergence of adaptive learning as a theme within this research, future research could examine executive NGO leaders from a lens of adaptive leadership and competencies within such a framework. Efficacy to performance links have been explored regarding transformational leadership (Walumbwa, et al., 2005); however, additional research is needed to explore the impact of efficacy and mediating factors toward leadership development for various leadership styles (Reichard, et al., 2017). Also, further research is needed to examine how the identified competencies align with training and development opportunities for executive leaders in international agricultural development, as well as educational opportunities for rising leaders in the field.

Mentoring has been promoted as a beneficial tool for leader development, yet very few empirical studies have explored the practice in light of leader self-efficacy and leadership development (Helber, 2015; Jnah & Robinson, 2015; Lester, et al., 2011; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Siebert, et al., 2017). Findings of this study indicated the integral role mentoring played for participants’ leadership development. Further research is needed to determine the extent of the role mentoring plays within leadership development and the development of leadership self-efficacy for executive NGO leaders in international agricultural development. Additional research across various sectors regarding the impact of mentoring on leadership development would benefit the broader research base of leadership development.
The role of mentoring at various stages of career could also be explored by leadership development practitioners (Bang& Reio, 2017; Lester, et al., 2011; Siebert, et al., 2017). Leadership educators could explore the role of mentoring within a classroom or experiential learning process connected to a degree path. Additionally, research could explore the broader impact of mentoring as a mediating factor on a leader’s self-efficacy through both the lens of being mentored and mentoring others on their leadership journey, as well as the combination of both aspects of mentoring (Siebert, et al., 2017).

Researcher Reflection

Transcendental phenomenology based upon Moustakas (1994) relies upon individual participant experiences to hold the voice within the research undertaken, not the voice of the researcher or previous literature (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). As such, the epoche process disconnects researcher biases and preconceived ideas of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I included a researcher subjectivity statement as an ephoce or display of bracketed experiences from my life that have influenced my perspective of leadership development and the international agricultural development sector. Reintegration enables the researcher to reflect upon the findings through their personal lens as part of the reflexive bracketing or epoche process to ensure the effectiveness of bracketing was attained and facilitate transparency of the research process (Gearing, 2004).

Leadership development has been an integral part of my life since I became engaged with agricultural youth organizations as a child in 4-H, then in the National FFA Organization, and Postsecondary Agricultural Student (PAS) Organization. Formal and informal programming through those organizations set my trajectory for leadership
education as an academic pathway. As such, leadership development terminology has been a part of my vocabulary and an assumed reflection of experiences for as long as I can remember. Intentionally setting aside these experiences within this research opened my eyes to how the research participants came to understand and experience leadership development on their journeys to serving as a NGO executive leader in international agricultural development.

My first international travel experience through the battlefields of Europe as an undergraduate student, as well as my first mission trip in 2012, were formative experiences in my leadership development. Experiences on those trips grew my interest in international travel, as well as agricultural development. While challenging, bracketing these experiences allowed me to learn from my participants how each experienced leadership development in various contexts, what drew them to the field of international agricultural development, and how they experienced the various events each shared.

Personally, missions involvement has become an important part of my life through various experiences and seeing the value of leadership development through spiritual, academic, and practical teaching. Connecting these experiences within the epoche set a consistent reminder to listen to and observe how participants articulated their leadership development journey to the executive leader role, along with their purpose for pursuing such a career path. Some personal and experiential commonalities provided a connection to establish trust within the interview process; however, the epoche was revisited to intentionally set aside these biases prior to data analysis. Insight gained through this research offered a rich perspective of the
incredible, diverse paths of leadership development into an executive NGO leadership role.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 5 discussed the key findings of the study, discussed implications through the mediating practices identified in the conceptual framework, and made recommendations for future research related to leadership development experiences of executive NGO leaders in international agricultural development. A researcher reflection offered a final perspective of the researcher’s methodology through reflexive bracketing. This study provided research on a criterion sample of executive NGO leaders in international agricultural development to add to the body of research regarding leadership development, self-efficacy, executive leader competencies, and leadership challenges.
APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

DATE: 10/10/2016
TO: Natalie Coers
   2002 McCarty Hall D Box 110270
   Gainesville, Florida 32611
FROM: Ira Fischler, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
      Chair IRB-02
IRB#: IRB201601433
TITLE: Agriculture on Mission: A Phenomenological Study of NGO Leaders in International Agricultural Development

Approved as Exempt

You have received IRB approval to conduct the above-listed research project. Approval of this project was granted on 10/10/2016 by IRB-02. This study is approved as exempt because it poses minimal risk and is approved under the following exempt category/categories:

2. This research involves the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Disclosure of the human subjects responses outside the research does not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities:

The PI is responsible for the conduct of the study.

- Using currently approved consent form to enroll subjects (if applicable)
- Renewing your study before expiration
- Obtaining approval for revisions before implementation
- Reporting Adverse Events
- Retention of Research Records
- Obtaining approval to conduct research at the VA
- Notifying other parties about this project’s approval status

Should the nature of the study change or you need to revise the protocol in any manner please contact this office prior to implementation.

Study Team:

Nicole Stedman Co-Investigator
Subject: NGO Leader Study Invitation

Dear [[first_name]] [[last_name]]:

You are invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation research study focused on NGO leaders in the field of international agricultural development. My name is Natalie Coers, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department at the University of Florida. My passion is in leadership development, and I have an interest in international development work. The intent of this research is to explore the experiences of NGO leaders in the field of international agricultural development to determine various competencies needed for such leadership positions, what challenges are commonly faced, and learn about individual experiences that brought leaders into their current position.

You are being contacted regarding this study as a recommendation from [insert recommender name here] OR based upon your noted leadership position and the stated mission of [insert organizational name here].

To participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview (approximately 45-90 minutes in length), provide supporting materials about your organization, and check the transcribed interview document following your interview.

To make participation as convenient as possible, we offer you the option of completing the interview via video conferencing or in person.

If you would like to participate in this study, please reply to this message and I will send the informed consent for your review. Once I receive a signed and scanned copy via email, we will work to schedule your interview.

If you would not like to participate in this study, please reply to this message and I will remove your name from the potential participant list so no further communication regarding the study is sent.

If you have any additional questions about this study (IRB#201601433), please contact: Natalie Coers, ncoers@ufl.edu, 352-273-3586

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this study.

Natalie Coers
Informed Consent

Protocol Title: Agriculture on Mission: A Phenomenological Study of NGO Leadership in International Agricultural Development

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to explore the essence of lived leadership development experiences by organizational leaders in international agricultural development. Four objectives guide this study:
1. Describe the leadership experiences of organizational leaders in international agricultural development;
2. Identify the structural essence of experienced leadership development processes by organizational leaders in international agricultural development;
3. Explore the leadership competencies needed for organizational leaders in international agricultural development; and
4. Identify current challenges in the leadership environment of international agricultural development.

What you will be asked to do in the study:
1. Be interviewed: Participants of this study will participate in an in-depth, individual interview (in person or via webcam) regarding their personal leadership development experiences in international agricultural development (Approximately 60 minutes in length). This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.
2. Provide supporting materials: Additional supporting materials may be requested to aid the researcher in understanding the culture of the organization in which you serve (i.e. mission statement, vision statement, training opportunities, etc.).
3. Check the written description: Participants may also be asked to check the transcribed interview and written description for accuracy. The time in this portion of the study will vary based on the length of interview and detail of checking.

Time required: 60-90 minutes.

Risks and Benefits:
Risks: At this time no risks are associated with participation in this study.

Benefits: While there are no direct benefits to the individual participant, this study seeks to contribute to the agricultural development field by exploring leadership development experiences of NGO leaders in international agricultural development, an understanding of leadership pathways and structures within the agricultural development field may enable development professionals to better prepare for future leadership needs within the industry, provide insight to higher education professionals for training and development of future leaders within the field, and identify skills and competencies both transferable and necessary for development in agriculture across various organizational contexts.

Compensation: None

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. The interview records and recordings for this study will be kept private. In any reports published, the author will not include participant names. Research records will be securely stored on a password protected file or in a locked office. All information collected for this study (data, interview recordings, etc.) will be archived in a secured file and discarded three years following the completion of the study, per federal requirements.

Voluntary participation: Your participation is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Natalie Coers, CALS Leadership Institute Program Coordinator, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, 2020 McCarty Hall D, Gainesville, Florida 32611, ncoers@ufl.edu, 352-273-3586

Nicole Stedman, Professor, Department of Agricultural Education & Communication, nstedman@ufl.edu
Whom to contact about your rights as a participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; 392-0433.

Agreement:
I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the institute and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _______________________________ Date: _______________

Principal Investigator: _______________________________ Date: _______________
Interview Protocol

1. Could you provide some basic information to establish your participant profile:
   a. What is your age?
   b. How long have you served in your current position?
   c. What are your responsibilities in this position?
   d. What is your educational background?
   e. Did you have any previous experience in international agricultural development prior to this role?
      i. Can you elaborate?

2. Could you share with me what your experience was leading you to this position — your pathway to the position?
   i. Can you elaborate?

3. Did you have any previous experiences that helped prepare you for your current role?

4. Have you had any mentors, personally or professionally, that have aided in your leadership development?

5. What competencies do you perceive as important for someone desiring to lead in this field of international agricultural development?

6. Does the organization provide opportunities for leadership development?
   a. If so, what do those look like?
   b. If so, who has access to such opportunities?
   c. If not, how do you continue to develop for your role?

7. What are some of the leadership challenges you face in this position? In this industry?

8. What motivates you to do what you do every day?

9. Is there anything you could tell me about your organization that I couldn’t find on the web?

10. Any recommendations of others within the field who I could benefit from talking with?
## APPENDIX E

### SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Theme/Objective</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Significant Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>Past Leadership Development Experiences</td>
<td>Professional Experiences</td>
<td>Then I went into the bartending business, then managing nightclubs. Then I was a police officer for 20 years. Home builder while I was a police officer for the last 10, and after -- in between that is when I started doing mission work….Well, I had worked with a couple of other NGO’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Past Leadership Development Experiences</td>
<td>Educational Experiences</td>
<td>I switched to aquaculture with the more extensive farming for the master’s as I felt called to go into this field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Past Leadership Development Experiences</td>
<td>Formative Experiences</td>
<td>I was personally responsible to the people I had hired and the farmers that were starting this program. So I decided that if I was ever going to start a new non-profit as I’d thought about, probably now was the time, even though I didn’t have any money and very limited skills and experience. It felt sort of like a now or never kind of situation. Since it also didn’t seem terribly realistic, I gave myself one day to figure out a reasonable way of doing it and said if I can’t figure it out tomorrow, then I should just face reality and go get a real job. And then in that one day that I gave myself, I got an e-mail from a man in Switzerland who I’d met on my last trip to Central America. And when I told him, he said to open a bank account for my new non-profit and he’d wired some money. And the next day there was $6,000 in that account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle</td>
<td>Past Leadership Development Experiences</td>
<td>Mentoring Experiences</td>
<td>Oh absolutely. In some ways, almost too many to count. Going back to when I was on the Hill, our legislative director was just an amazing woman and really helped me not make some of those early career missteps and there was another woman who actually, she was a lobbyist, but she continues to be a friend and a mentor just sort of digging through things and helping to think beyond sort of what’s right in front of you and to the bigger picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Leadership Development Practices</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Current Leadership Self-Directed Learning</td>
<td>I would say the biggest is reading, making sure I'm trying to stay up with both literature and, you know, conversations. It's always harder and harder to do, especially as, you know, things are a little bit broad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Current Leadership Development Forma Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>[location] had like a pretty robust like nonprofit group. So they have like group training for like all the nonprofits once a month and everybody gets together and you can meet people, which is cool, and that's also funded through those two foundations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Current Leadership Development On-the-job Experiences</td>
<td>That sort of practical hands-on learning by doing approach is I think in our case, you know, essential that we're doing sort of grassroots bottom-up rural development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Current Leadership Development Mentoring Needs</td>
<td>I wish...some of those areas that I know that I'm for sure lacking, personnel management. I wish there was a way to either get training or mentoring or something and some of that because I know that is a place that I'm quite weak, but I honestly don't really even know what's out there for that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Current Leadership Development Establishing a Community or Network</td>
<td>But when I came to work here, what I -- one of the things I realized is we had no idea of the quality or lack of quality of our own program. We had no benchmarks. Our board believed that we were doing the best work there was, but we had no idea what other people were doing, or where to benchmark, or what we could learn. So it's network and learn. Almost every problem, somebody's addressed before.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Leadership Development Practices for Future Leaders Empowerment of staff and others toward development</td>
<td>We look for ways to give people an opportunity to grow their competencies not only through kind of more formal training things but also in scope of work they do here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle</td>
<td>Leadership Development Practices for Future Leaders Opportunities for the next generation</td>
<td>There are probably three to four younger professional women and men not on my team here who I hope I'm providing that same kind of sounding board and guidance and a little bit of experience that I can add to their thinking and decision making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Performance Accomplishments Agricultural</td>
<td>In the international ag side of things, it was more with the University of Panama. I came down to work with them for a few months and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
studied with them more than anything…. while I was here for that four months is when I really began a lot of the projects that I’ve been working on for the last 12 years or so. Well, the original ones. I’ve now moved on to other villages, other places, but the original projects and how things really started and got rolling was in that four months.

And then working at [organization] in Boston, I learned a lot from the leadership there, both the fundraising leaderships and the organizational leadership.

So for me to learn on other people puts me way ahead of the curve of where I’d be if I said I’m going to go get a development degree or an ag development degree or whatever.

Even though I was miserable I still felt like God was working on me in the process. And it took another couple of years before I felt all right enough to go for a two months trip. After that I came to Panama for a couple of months, and that’s when I was interned with a missionary here and worked with the University of Panama a few days a week studying tropical agriculture. And through all of that, God just slowly changed my heart to where I knew that even though I am very much a homebody, and I still really wish I was close to my family, that he taught me to trust him more and to know that, though I missed home and I missed my family, that I’m only going to be happy if I’m within God’s will, and that’s, yes, through those short-term mission trips and a few other things through college. He worked on me enough to get me to understand that a little bit better.

we gathered our friends together and, you know, went through this whole process with them brainstorming, looking for how can we do this thing and landed on a stand-alone nonprofit and that’s when we founded [organization].

One of his phrases I like is he says he wants to inspire people before they expire. And so I think that's what we try to do and so if they're having trouble feeding their family and we teach them how to raise their own food, we're empowering them and they're excited about
that and that gives them hope for a better life. One man who was in one of the first workshops I did, he said what you’ve taught us is more valuable than money. He said what you’ve taught us will not only impact us but will impact our children and our grandchildren. And then I also felt very strongly about sort of the biblical basis around caring for those that are in difficult circumstances. I think there’s a lot of, no matter what faith tradition you look at; I happened to be raised in the Christian tradition, but no matter what faith tradition you look at, there’s tons to be thought about caring for those that are hurting most, that are suffering and doing something in a way that brings dignity to them through your helping.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Vision and Organizational Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochelle</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Trust and Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randell</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Cultural Insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Building Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>People Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Emotional Arousal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Matt Emotional Arousal Responding with care

Having a strong vision and a willingness to stick with it through all the ups and downs. A strong enough passion for what you’re doing I think is really critical.

I’d say strategic thinking and thinking beyond your own organization. Looking at that big picture and really being able to see what piece you play in that broader solution. I think it’s really easy to fall into the trap of thinking you’ve got to take on everything, but knowing what your role is and how to maximize against that I think is really important.

In a nonprofit it's such a different level of accountability and transparency to not just a board of directors or investors or whatever, it is everybody. It’s the entire body of the general public has the right to look at my books and hold me accountable for how we manage donated funds.

understanding the local community is important so like being a good listener

Good practices and being able to hire and manage the right people and make sure those things are in place.

We take seriously our responsibility to communicate the realities of the work that we do, not only the reality of the impact that we’re seeing, but we present people that we’re serving around the world in
a way that gives them the dignity they’re due, that doesn’t kind of exploit them to have an emotional impact or purpose. Get their name. Get their picture. Get their quote. I guess that’s part of leadership training. I’m training them and obviously if you want people to donate to help you do this, if I just say well we trained over 4,000 people. We did 93 workshops in 13 countries, that sounds impressive but that really doesn’t touch people’s hearts like it does if you’ve got the person’s picture and their name and they tell you how it changed their life and what it did for their family. That’s what touches people.

Agriculture and the number of possibilities are kind of endless.

Being teachable, being a learner because while there’s some base realities that are pretty consistent, there are a lot of things that change and our understandings of them change, contacts are always fluid cultures, bring the opportunities and challenges so I think being a learner. I think continuing always to learn and be open to learning, being humble about what we know and what we don’t know and what the people that we seek to serve and partner with know and don’t know.

before he took over and the complicating piece was that we had an executive director who was very hands on to his working in the field 60 hours a week. . . . and like you just like I don’t want that and I don’t know anybody that’s my age that’s a male or a female that wants that. And so I think that there’s a shift in what we’re willing to do and that’s good, you know, like that’s like important for family dynamics and important for like holistic self-care and things like that, and so I think like in the broader sphere like those people, like my grandparents are all missionaries and they just worked all the time, you know, and I’m like I just don’t see, I don’t see our generation being like that.

how to communicate and work with the leadership and the staff to encourage them to step forward and be willing to put in that extra
effort and take those, embrace those risks as opportunities to expand the impact and work that they do care passionately about. So it’s figuring out how to honor the motivations and the deeper desires of people.

How do we keep people encouraged when there’s not enough money to do what we want to do. That’s another one that’s been a constant challenge. . . . . a lot of people with ag development backgrounds that would like to work here, and I need five fundraisers for every ag specialist. It might even be a higher ratio than that, but that’s, you know, that’s a, that’s a tough thing, you know.

Making sure that the board has sort of that dashboard of not just the activities that we’re undertaking, but why we’re undertaking these activities and how they fit into our theory of change and moving the needle forward.

Developing, you know, a clear, strategic plan and getting all the different actors in the organization from the board to the staff to the partners around the world bought into and excited about, you know, the direction of the organization.

So logistically is probably the biggest challenge of all of our work. Agriculture represents food security. It represents economy. It represents so many parts of our work and the logical challenges of getting helpful resources there is probably the greatest challenge.

Developing strong, Godly leaders. Discipleship doesn’t happen in a week.
## APPENDIX F
### SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT KEY PHRASES EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Key statement words</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current/Establishing a community or network</td>
<td>People that you rub shoulders with that you learn from</td>
<td>Cornell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We don’t have to learn everything the hard way</td>
<td>Randell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network and learn</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current/Formal</td>
<td>Trainings . . . courses</td>
<td>Randell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonprofit leadership course</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I went through a program</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current/Mentoring Needs</td>
<td>Not as much as I would’ve hoped.</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have been looking for others</td>
<td>Dale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish . . . training or mentoring</td>
<td>Casey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current/On-the-job</td>
<td>Most of it’s experiential</td>
<td>Matt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
<td>Stan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands-on learning</td>
<td>Rochelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current/Self-directed</td>
<td>I’m seeking ways to improve my leadership</td>
<td>Cornell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m a prolific reader</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I read the word</td>
<td>Alan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future/Empowering</td>
<td>Made available a number of courses</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering them with training</td>
<td>Matt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empower the people</td>
<td>Alan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future/Next generation</td>
<td>Internship program</td>
<td>Dale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paired up with a Bible college</td>
<td>Casey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replicate ourselves</td>
<td>Randell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past/Education</td>
<td>I spent a summer in Guatemala studying Spanish.</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of my classes</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I switched to aquaculture</td>
<td>Casey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past/Formative</td>
<td>The first time I went to Kenya</td>
<td>Cornell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Started volunteering at [organization]</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That was a calling for me</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past/Mentors</td>
<td>he was a guy who had deep and profound wisdom.</td>
<td>Dale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I’ve had some great mentors over the years. Matt
he really helped mentor me in non-profits. Alan
Past/Professional
I came out of the Peace Corps. Felicia
I worked for a for-profit company. Matt
one of the portfolios that I had was agriculture . . . work on
hunger. Rochelle
Performance
We’ve become experts in this little niche. Randell
Accomplishments/Agriculture
background in teaching and agriculture. Cornell
worked in 25 countries around the world and did a lot of
small-scale ag-related work. Dale
Performance
I learned a lot from the leadership there. Felicia
Accomplishments/Organizational
being an officer in the Navy teaches you. Stuart
advocacy experience throughout my career. Rochelle
Emotional Arousal/Responding with care
to help people to, you know, give them the opportunities to
improve their own lives. Stan
that’s what breaks my heart and that’s what gets me up every
morning. Mark
there’s tons to be thought about caring for those that are
hurting most. Matt
Emotional Arousal/Multiplication
different ways that we have impacted them. Cornell
hearing their stories, celebrating with them. Stuart
replacing generation after generation of despair with hope. Mark
Vicarious experiences
showed us how to really conduct a Christian organization. Casey
learn from the successes of others as well as the mistakes. Cornell
People . . . who have decades of experience working on
sustainable agriculture I’ve learned a lot from as well as my
colleagues. Stan
Verbal Persuasion/Stakeholder
a discussion again with the international dean. Cornell
we gathered our friends together and, you know, went
through this whole process with them brainstorming. Randell
our board chair, has been fantastic on that. Rochelle
Verbal Persuasion/Spiritual
praying about it and inviting others to pray with us. Dale
Talk to us about it seriously and pray about it? Mark
<p>| Competencies/Adaptive                      | I felt God called me                                                                 | Casey                  |
|                                        | Every situation is different.                                                        | Matt                   |
|                                        | But I think too not thinking you know it all because none of us ever know it all in this space | Rochelle               |
|                                        | continuing always to learn and be open to learning, being humble about what we know and what we don’t know | Dale                   |
| Competencies/Building awareness         | present your case to different audiences                                             | Stan                   |
|                                        | public face of the organization                                                      | Stuart                 |
|                                        | responsibility to communicate the realities of the work that we do                    | Dale                   |
| Competencies/Cultural                   | To be able to read a culture and know how to work within that culture                | Casey                  |
|                                        | understanding the local community is important so like being a good listener          | Rachel                 |
|                                        | the importance of local people working with their neighbors.                         | Felicia                |
|                                        | the importance of local people working with their neighbors.                         |                        |
| Competencies/Fundraising                | Fundraising is absolutely essential                                                  | Stan                   |
|                                        | You can’t hide from fundraising                                                      | Stuart                 |
|                                        | find donors that are a little bit more risk tolerant                                  | Matt                   |
| Competencies/People management          | we need to make sure that we have built relationships                                | Cornell                |
|                                        | to hire and manage the right people                                                  | Stan                   |
|                                        | It’s a big job to manage and utilize that many volunteers                            | Dale                   |
| Competencies/Strategic thinking         | strategic thinking and thinking beyond your own organization.                       | Rochelle               |
|                                        | understanding the big picture                                                        | Stuart                 |
|                                        | a strategic thinker                                                                 | Rachel                 |
| Competencies/Technical                  | agriculture and the number of possibilities are kind of endless                      | Matt                   |
|                                        | Of course, well-trained in whatever their specific field is.                         | Casey                  |
|                                        | the agricultural aspect                                                             |                        |
| Competencies/Trust &amp; Transparency       | the entire body of the general public has the right to look at my books and hold me accountable | Randell                |
|                                        | trust building . . . is really essential in terms of, yeah, building a positive organizational culture | Stan                   |
|                                        | transparency and accountability                                                      | Felicia                |
| Competencies/Vision &amp; organizational    | the mission of the organization                                                     | Matt                   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>challenges/areas</th>
<th>quote</th>
<th>person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>a strong vision and a willingness to stick with it through all the ups and downs. Visionary is important</td>
<td>Felicia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Agricultural development awareness</td>
<td>getting people to realize that short-term is a good start but it doesn't end there to really have that long-term impact recognizing the value of building the capacity of the organization Agriculture represents food security</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Board development</td>
<td>Making sure that the board has sort of that dashboard make sure that they understand things like oversight, conflict of interest Board development and board interface</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Communication</td>
<td>communication is definitely a challenge keeping everybody on the same page getting all the different actors in the organization from the board to the staff to the partners around the world bought into and excited</td>
<td>Rochelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Leadership expectations</td>
<td>the balance of all those pieces that are necessary inherent paternalistic expectation that I think is a huge problem they just worked all the time, you know, and I'm like I just don't see our generation being like that.</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/People management</td>
<td>Working with volunteers is very, very different than working with employees helping people grow into the roles that they've already assumed balancing act is improving quality, enforcing standards, but not doing it in a top-down, impositional way.</td>
<td>Randell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Resource management</td>
<td>necessary for us to be sustainable The fundraising side is always critical we could really use some more funding</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges/Succession</td>
<td>we have a number of local NGO leaders who are older</td>
<td>Stan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I think it’s a challenge for any, particularly small nonprofit. Developing strong godly leaders. Discipleship doesn’t happen in a week.
Participant 1 (Cornell)

Leadership development – the phenomena of interest in this study – is experienced by Participant 1 primarily through informal means. Examples provided through the interview included the role of peer inquiry and interest in leadership, peers through partnerships/working with other trainers, a desire to help others, and a personal inquisitive nature. The desire to learn and lead well is also complimented through reading and outside leadership experiences (i.e. church, vocational agriculture teacher association, etc.). At an organizational level, minimal opportunities for formal leadership development are provided.

Numerous experiences aided in Participant 1 developing efficacy to lead in the dynamic environments of work within international agricultural development. Mastery experiences of leading workshops, teaching, serving in various leadership roles, as well as extensive international travel bring efficacious beliefs to the executive role. Vicarious experiences of learning from others and seeking out advice demonstrated the desire to learn in order to lead well. Verbal persuasion and encouragement from others provided context for pursuing work to meet observed needs, in addition to stepping into the Director role. Physiological arousal was attained through numerous examples of the impact of the work and the pursuit of a higher purpose of helping others with affective knowledge and skills. Mentors throughout personal and professional arenas also provided ample encouragement, motivation, and efficacious belief for Participant 1 to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.
Competencies important to leaders within international agricultural development were expressed, including asking questions and listening, fundraising, and several elements of helping and not hurting those we go to serve. A balance of understanding the task at hand for any given project, but also the people engaged or being served through the project is integral to leading well. Cultural understanding is an important competency, but also expressed as a key challenge in international agricultural development work. With cultural differences also comes challenges of gender roles within any given culture and working as an outsider within a country. Other challenges included working with government processes—which may be corrupt—and communication challenges across translators. Succession of leadership is also a key challenge in our organizations, as is ensuring that those traveling as representatives of your organization are trained well for lead within the cultural context.

Participant 2 (Stan)

Regarding leadership development – the phenomenon of interest in this study—Participant 2 emphasized the need for mentoring or coaching within the executive level position. The primary means of leadership development experiences expressed was through experiential means, including several skills developed through previous employment. While reading was expressed as another means for development, time constraints within this complex field of work were also expressed for limited engagement with such development practices.

Capacity development for serving within an executive role was an interwoven web of personal experiences, learning from others or vicarious experiences from others in the field, and the deeply engrained belief for the work that must continue to be done within agricultural development. Though technical training within agriculture is not
necessary, it was suggested that practical experience within the field could be beneficial.

Numerous competencies were listed as beneficial sources of information relevant to leadership development for an executive role. Fundraising, management oversight, and board development were all listed as critical skills. People/relationship competencies, as well as networking to continue learning from accumulated experiences. Challenges faced within this context included managing the complexity of work within this context, working through fundraising, and having a complex vision for the organization. Additional challenges faced include limited resources and shifts in the way agricultural based development curriculum is delivered as organizations continue to face concerns regarding succession within the field of international agricultural development.

**Participant 3 (Randell)**

Leadership development—the phenomenon of interest in this study—was experienced by Participant 3 primarily as an informal process. Multiple experiences in a variety of vocational endeavors enabled a complex set of skills transferable to the endeavor of the executive leader role of a non-government organization. Mentors have played an integral role along the journey in regards to leadership development and guidance for this undertaking. Some additional, formal training specific to the agricultural work opportunities set before the participant were approached as learning opportunities in order to best serve others. Within their role, Participant 3 has intentionally designed the organization’s work to facilitate multiplication of knowledge, as well as the volunteer structure to expand the organization’s work.
To accomplish the multiple responsibilities within the executive leadership role, Participant 3 found encouragement from his wife and a number of mentors. The knowledge and experience from the participant’s missionary work in Tanzania brought the arousal to intentionally apply those resources for a greater benefit to others. With no other organization doing such work, the participant was encouraged and led to found the organization. The desire to learn and continue to grow in knowledge for the benefit of those the organization serves is a powerful source of motivation and drive. An assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses enables the participant to keep a clear picture of needs for leading the organization well, and his faith drives the model of training and overall purpose of service through the organization.

Competencies essential for serving in an executive leadership role within international agricultural development include: people management, organizational structuring, integrity, accounting and logistics. Additionally, an open mind to various world views and an understanding of one’s own world view are critical for understanding and relating to others that are different. To work in this field, a leader must have grit to take on the challenges of serving the ‘least of these’ with respect in a manner that is helpful, not hurtful. Challenges faced as a leader in this field may arise as people management issues, working with volunteers, fundraising, and succession planning to maintain a sustainable organization. Other challenges may arise from external sources, such as climate change impacting areas the organization serves, economies and other factors or the poverty cycle. In the midst of these challenges, a leader must be able to withstand carious perspectives and opinions to follow the vision for the organization according to his/her personal convictions and organizational foundations.
Participant 4 (Stuart)

Participant 4 experienced the phenomenon of study –leadership development—primarily through various experiences that enabled growth and learning to efficaciously approach his position as an executive leader. Previous experiences in the Navy enabled the adaptive management and leadership skills needed within the non-government organization context. Though a couple of mentors provided insight in the earlier years of development within his role, an overall desire for more mentoring over the years was expressed. Continued leadership development is pursued mainly through reading; additional opportunities are pursued through formal courses and networking. Such formal training opportunities are encouraged for rising leaders within the organization.

Regarding various sources of efficacy and practices toward leadership development in the executive leadership role, the need for accountability through oversight, as well as an attitude of learning and adapting as the job progresses were emphasized. Previous experiences enabled progress, and motivation for the work came through various inspirational stories of impact around the world. Having a personal, up-close experience with international development through an academic opportunity opened this unexpected career path with a higher purpose, and adaptability to lead across cultures.

Participant 4 strongly emphasized the variation of competencies needed in the executive leadership role based upon the size of the organization. While some more technical aspects or the organization’s work (i.e. agriculture, microfinance) may be needed as a smaller organization, broader management and understanding the bigger picture are imperative for leading organizations of any size. Fundraising is also an integral competency for an executive leader. Challenges faced by executive leaders
include the structural challenges of guiding international, yet independent, areas of the organization; evaluation of various structural elements and board training also fall within the oversight of the executive leader. Additional challenges faced by executive leaders focus on resources, or lack thereof, in remaining encouraging while operating within limitations amidst the desire to grow and impact more people.

**Participant 5 (Dale)**

Participant 5 experienced the phenomenon of interest —leadership development—primarily through various life experiences, including educational opportunities and previous work endeavors. Key mentors and a deep faith have continued to impact his leadership capacity as opportunities for growth came about. A strong network of peer-mentor colleagues have provided a sounding board for progress within the organization. Serving as an example for staff and interns keeps Participant 5 reading, listening, and learning for better ways of leading the organization toward the established vision. His personal leadership development reflects within the opportunities encouraged for staff and intern development, as well as the desire to make positive leadership transitions when needed. Additionally, seeking a network of others within a similar organizational context is an integral step in continued leadership development.

Relationships that encourage and challenge towards deeper development are highly valued, and opportunities to apply the developed skills and experiences for a deeper purpose are sought by Participant 5. Work throughout the world throughout his career provide both the experience and motivation to push forward with a greater vision for the potential impact of the organization. Accountability to the Board also plays a role in the effective leadership of the organization, as well as the entrusted responsibility to carry out the vision and goals set forth.
To lead in such a dynamic environment as in international agricultural development work, a key competency is the ability to learn and be taught. Additionally, strategic thinking, focus, and effective communication are essential competencies for ensuring the message of the organization is presented well and work organized in an intentional manner. Volunteer management is another key competency that hold great value for expanding the impact of the organization. Challenges within the executive leadership role include ensuring the organizational culture is healthy and receptive to change and growth, paying attention to individual staff or intern needs, and building capacity of the organization for a sustainable impact. Additionally, it is imperative to be developing the next generation of leaders within the organization while also being strategic in the pursuit of growth opportunities for all toward a purpose that goes beyond the organization itself.

**Participant 6 (Mark)**

Participant 6 experienced the phenomenon of interest—leadership development—primarily through his 22-year career in the business world, as a member of various leadership groups and serving within community organizations, such as Rotary. However, the transition into the non-profit sector was brought about through serving on the board of directors for the organization, pertinent reading, various international experiences, and an overall calling to serve in the capacity of an executive leader for the organization. His leadership approach differed greatly from his predecessor, so leading the organization feels much like beginning a new organization or an entrepreneurial endeavor. Leadership development is encouraged within the organization through an upcoming formalized internship program, as well as external staff development opportunities. Personally, Participant 6 has benefitted greatly from
engagement in the Accord Network, personal reading, as well as having a learning attitude as he engages with new hires and seeking our strategic learning opportunities from peer organizations while traveling.

Pursuit of this executive leadership role came through encouragement of others, and honestly assessing what he could bring to the organization. Not having the technical background for the international agricultural development work of the organization, Participant 6 seeks to continue learning those aspects as he travels and through the experts hired to lead the more technical areas of the organization. Motivation to continue leading the organization primarily comes through realizing the privilege of bringing hope to people through very practical means of agriculture.

Competencies for executive leadership within an international agricultural development organization included some transferability of entrepreneurial skills, as well as strategic thinking, organizational vision, and collaboration. Numerous challenges to lead within this complex environment were discussed; a key challenge is working with people and discerning what opportunities are best to pursue for their continued development. Additional challenges for leading the organization are the logistical challenges of taking agricultural resources and knowledge to incredibly remote areas. Narrowing the focus of the organization’s work to attain greater depth and impact presents another leadership challenge, as well as the desire to create measures of accountability through evaluation practices.

Participant 7 (Felicia)

Participant 7 experienced leadership development—the phenomenon of interest—primarily through professional opportunities. Her time in the Peace Corps was formative to her desire to serve in international agricultural development, though not
quite ready to begin an organization directly upon her return. Her work in various organizations enabled growth and networking. A negative experience at an organization led to the founding of the current organization with the support of a connection to get started. Organizations such as Opportunity Collaboration have provided opportunities for shared growth for Participant 7, and staff members are encouraged to continue developing when time is available. Along the journey, several key mentors and board members have guided Participant 7 as big questions and strategic planning are addressed.

Key aspects of leadership development have included those prior work experiences, as well as a sense of responsibility to those the organization is working with in development. Learning from others is important, both for what practices to implement and what to not do for the benefit of all. It is especially important to learn from those you are working with in development; local knowledge is incredibly valuable and aids in ensuring sustainable practices. Participant 7 is motivated to push herself in this line of work from a deep love for the earth and desire for it to be sustained for generations to come. A deep respect for the investment of board members to understand the work of the organization and speak wisdom into the advancement of the organization was also expressed.

Competencies needed to fulfill the executive leadership role within an international agricultural development organization include a commitment to transparency and accountability, a strong vision for the work to be done, and experience within a similar context to the organization’s work or understanding of the importance of indigenous contributions to the development work. Additionally, a leader must be open-
minded and appreciation for listening well to the people. Challenges that may arise include building a team around your vision, fundraising, and keeping everyone on the same page in spite of various ways of thinking or approaches to development work. From a broader perspective, challenges facing the agricultural development industry include the focus on commodity crops or conventional farming that impact the longevity of development efforts, as well as concerns of finding successors that have a combination of skills and knowledge for agricultural development based organizations.

**Participant 8 (Casey)**

Regarding the phenomenon of interest—leadership development—Participant 8 expressed a key challenge of time and money for such development efforts. Over time, much of his leadership development has come through mentors along the journey and through formal, academic training within the technical applications of his work. Establishing the organization was a formative experience, achieved through a mutual stumbling toward the goal by the newly formed board and Participant 8. The small size of the organization lends itself to the key areas of expertise; additional development opportunities for areas perceived as lacking within the executive director role were unknown. Investment in the development of the future generation of agricultural development professionals, however, is a key component of the organization’s strategic plan and connections.

Efficacy toward the mission at hand was primarily developed through various academic experiences and a deep sense of/process of calling to the mission field. Experiences pursued as part of his education came full circle to serve as the launching point of the organization. While mentors have certainly aided in his journey and
development through the sharing of their learning, the key motivation and guidance has come through his faith in God.

Competencies for leading within an international agricultural development organization included technical skills for the specific area of development work the organization is setting out to do, cross-cultural skills, and employee management skills. A strong sense of self-awareness is imperative for understanding the strengths and weaknesses the leader is bringing to the table, and integral in establishing a team to continue the work. Challenges are significant within this line of work. Specifically for Participant 8, helping others develop into their specific roles within the organization provided a challenge. Additionally, helping others commit to development efforts and understand the process such work requires is a tremendous challenge within the American culture of quick results.

**Participant 9 (Matt)**

Participant 9 had a seemingly natural inclination toward the phenomenon of interest–leadership development. His experiences evolved through professional endeavors in the for-profit sector before being introduced to the work of the non-profit organization. His belief in experiential learning and self-awareness to enable the best fit into a role for a leader are also reflected in the organization’s approach to leadership development. Underlying aspects of Participant 9’s faith brought him to fully engage within this organization and the way in which the organization operates. Mentors over the years have provided encouragement and support for further leadership development both personally and professionally. Empowerment for leading change and sustaining the dignity of each person were emphasized in regards to leadership influences.
Motivation for leadership within the context of this work has in past been for the people served; however, further self-reflection has left this motivation hopeful of pure intentions but not conclusive in thought. Also, a positivist belief that people are generally working with good intentions, though possibly in very different ways than one’s personal approach of a situation, has carried the development perspective for Participant 9, along with the underlying Biblical foundations of the organization.

Needed competencies for leading an organization within international agricultural development is highly contextual – dependent upon the size and scope of the organization and whether or not an individual is a good fit. In light of the contextual specific need, leaders need to be highly competent and aware of their strengths and weaknesses to offer an organization. Leaders in this field also need to be a bit more risk-tolerant, as well as willing to seek out donors who are likewise able to invest in agricultural (potentially high-risk) endeavors. Challenges faced within the non-profit sector of international agricultural development include the perception of the executive leader holding the answers to many complex issues, risk-averse leaders and donors, and a tendency for paternalistic leaders coming in to fix a situation. For Participant 9, challenges also arise with the repetition of information with new staff, volunteers, and donors who need to hear the story for the first time; however, a deep commitment to the organization’s mission pushes him through such repetitive time commitments.

Participant 10 (Rachel)

Participant 10 experienced the phenomenon of leadership development primarily through formal learning opportunities. Introduced to the organization during college, her combination of education and business experiences brought her to work for the organization. After working with the organization for 5 years, Participant 10 advocated
for the interim executive director position to enable stronger decision making capabilities for the organization. Leadership development opportunities were presented throughout her career from robust local organizations that invested in community organization development with monthly workshops, as well as an intensive leadership program. Mentors arose along her journey through colleagues as well as network connections from the formal learning opportunities. Motivation for continued work within international agricultural development comes through the satisfaction of multiplied efforts, as well as the opportunity to learn from other partners around the world to enhance the organization’s training and impact.

Numerous competencies were discussed as important to an executive leader within the international agricultural development field, including stress management, risk management, and intelligence – technical, social, and emotional. Vision, strategic thinking, organization, and integrity also were discussed. The ability to listen and learn from community partners is another integral competency to face the numerous challenges within development work. A key challenge regarding succession within international agricultural development work is the changing work habits and expectations of the rising generation of workers and leaders. Financial and staff management, along with challenges of traditional gender roles within organizational and cultural dynamics were also expressed.

**Participant 11 (Rochelle)**

Participant 11 has experienced the phenomenon of interest—leadership development—primarily through various professional experiences and mentors throughout her career. Entering the non-profit career field was a transition fueled by a desire to have a more meaningful impact with her work, and built upon an interest in
hunger issues that was interweaved throughout her life experiences from a young age.

Within the executive role of an international agricultural development organization and not having an agricultural development background, hands-on experiences have provided the greatest opportunities for leadership development, as well as working with an executive coach. Though formal leadership development opportunities have not been pursued due to time constraints, Participant 11 feels supported for such endeavors by the organization’s board. Prior experiences, both personally and professionally, have provided the underlying confidence and efficacy for excellence within her position and organizational pursuits. Additionally, her leadership development experiences through mentoring have inspired her to likewise serve as a mentor to the next generation of rising leaders.

Several competencies were discussed as important for an executive leader within this field. Communication and strategic thinking were expressed as essential, as was empathy. Humility also was noted as a desired competency – one that embodies learning, acknowledging mistakes, and adaptability to various scenarios a leader may be faced with in this line of work. Coalition management is yet another integral competency for bringing people together around a common area of interest. These competencies aid in facing the numerous challenges faced by executive leaders in the agricultural development context. Limited resources fuel an ongoing challenge of making programs work for scarce resources within the development settings around the world. Measuring success within the non-profit world is also a challenge; gathering meaningful data that can aid in effectively communicating the work that the organization
does to its staff, donors, and board for deeper understanding. Succession was also discussed as a key challenge.

**Participant 12 (Alan)**

Participant 12 has experienced leadership development—the phenomenon of interest—primarily through professional opportunities along his diverse career path, particularly in the police academy, and through personal study. Early on, a key mentor aided in developing Participant 12 within mission work and in the non-profit sector. Additional experiences internationally on mission continued to strengthen his beliefs the empowerment of locals and listening are essential for developing leaders within a cultural context for the best development work to occur and be sustained. Integral to continuing to develop leaders within a cultural context is a discipleship process; likewise, the key development tool for personal leadership is reading the Bible. Although mentors have played a role in his development, leadership development through the administrative lens specifically working within the NGO sector has been an experiential learning process.

Essential competencies for leadership within the international agricultural development sector include transparency, godliness, and trustworthiness. Additionally, a strong emphasis was placed on setting pride aside to serve humbly, learn about the people and their needs, and learn best practices from the people while empowering them to take ownership of the work. A major challenge within mission work is finding the next generation of loyal and trustworthy leaders to carry on the work within a cultural context that so often does not encourage such characteristics. However, succession is inevitable and leaders must always be looking for potential future leaders to carry on the
work of the organization. The discipleship process is also a challenge, ensuring the maturity and preparedness of a future leader.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Natalie Coers received her Associate in Science from Lincoln Land Community College (Springfield, IL) in 2006, Bachelor of Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2008, and Master of Agricultural Leadership from the University of Georgia in 2010. In 2010, Natalie joined the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) Dean’s Office as the Program Coordinator for the CALS Leadership Institute and CALS Teaching Resource Center. She simultaneously pursued her Ph.D. in Agricultural Education and Communication with a Leadership Development focus, begun in fall 2012 and finished in summer 2017. Her research focuses on leadership development experiences of NGO executive leaders in international agricultural development.