Rethinking Corporate Responsibility: Addressing Ghana’s Urban Water Crisis by Utilizing the Agility Corporation’s Leadership Purposes and Practices

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Introduction

As water resources become scarce across the globe, the importance of water accessibility, quality, and resource management have emerged as critical concerns. Considering the importance of remapping the purposes of leadership, the case of urban water distribution in Ghana is relevant because it requires a transformational and adaptive approach to leadership. Agility employed these leadership concepts and it is important to recognize how these can be mirrored to improve the leadership approach in urban areas of Ghana. These principles will afford the opportunity to uncover unique solutions in order to equitably use the natural resources of the planet we share.

Ghana’s Urban Water Crisis

Although there is a sufficient amount of water to supply every Ghanaian, many urban residents do not have access to clean water. Various shareholders have attempted to alleviate the disparity of water access in urban Ghana. These entities include, but are not exclusive to:

- World Bank: Ghana’s premier lender that aimed to establish a private sector participation policy (Whitfield 425).
- Ghana Water Company Ltd: State owned LLC solely responsible for urban water supply (Awuah, Nyarko, and Owusu 44-45).
- Ghana Water Forum: Local factions engaged in discussion to address the governance of water (“Third Ghana Water Forum Opens”).
- Aqua Vitens Rand Ltd: Privately held company contracted to develop an efficient water treatment and dispersion system (Ainuson 63).

The focus on efficiency rather than equity has increased tension between the governing bodies and Ghanaian citizens.

Leadership Challenges

The governing bodies that were charged with developing a water dispersion system encountered leadership challenges in the following ways:

1) Adaptive challenges addressed as technical problems:
   - Bodies possessed mechanical solutions but overlooked political and cultural influences
2) Utilized transactional approach to crisis:
   - Entities invested capital but did not incorporate cultural considerations into their approach
3) Authority and influence misinterpreted:
   - Major players made decisions on behalf of the stakeholders as opposed to consulting, facilitating, or delegating responsibilities

Agility Leadership Analysis

Agility successfully executed the Adaptive Leadership Approach with regards to the Lebanon Conflict through the following four steps:

Diagnose the Situation

- Identifying values, motivations and stakes of factions involved
- Agility effectively identified and utilized stakeholder resources and needs

Manage Self

- Understanding role with respect to capabilities and vulnerabilities
- Agility isolated work as being pro-bono opposed to potential monetary gain

Intervene Skillfully

- Act appropriately as a part of the overall system and solution
- Agility gave work back to groups involved depending on strengths and weaknesses

Energize Others

- Inspiring engagement by effectively building a trustworthy process
- Agility connected with their purpose of humanitarian aid

Recommendations

The urban water crisis in Ghana should be viewed and addressed through the adaptive leadership framework. By effectively diagnosing the situation, intervening skillfully, managing self, and energizing others – outlined in the Agility Leadership example – all factions involved will likely benefit. Utilization of these concepts and the key recommendations listed below will provide the leadership necessary to address the water issues in Ghana.

Technical Problems v. Adaptive Challenges

- Proper identification of the technical and adaptive aspects of the crisis will provide a more accurate diagnosis of what response is beneficial for the long term

Engage Unusual Voices

- Allowing employees directly involved with the groundwork to adjust the process of adaptive leadership

Act Experimentally

- Adaptive Leadership encourages leaders to take risks and view all successes and failures as data and progress towards addressing the challenge

Give the Work Back

- By using the Ghana Water Forum for guidance, strong proposals can evolve by evaluating the dispersal, transmission, and distribution of responsibilities

Identifying Values

- Drawing a clear line between humanitarian aid and financial benefit will better align the overall goals of the joint efforts

If these recommendations are followed, entities from around the world will be able to successfully maneuver the adaptive challenges involved in many global issues.

References and Acknowledgements


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