



AFRICAN WOMEN'S  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

**The 4<sup>th</sup> CEO Forum  
On Leadership &  
Governance**

**CONVENING REPORT**



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4<sup>th</sup> AWDF CEO Forum

March 25 – 27, 2015

Nairobi, Kenya

## An Introduction to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual CEO Forum



Nafi Chinery enjoys a light moment at the CEO Forum with participants and moderator, Dr. Awino Okech

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), we sincerely thank the lead facilitators, Hope Chigudu and Christine Gachu-Katee, for helping to implement the three-day workshop. We appreciate their critical input into this process and look forward to the gains that will be made through the 18-month coaching program. We also recognize the energetic investment of our grantee partners who participated in the forum, providing active contributions throughout each session.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Comic Relief, for sponsoring this training through the Maanda Project. We hope that key issues and outcomes in this training report will lend insights to strategies that enhance women's leadership, organizational development and governance processes across Africa.

*Last year, we focused on the individual at the CEO Forum.*

*However, we discovered during the process that you cannot look at the organizational level without the individual and community level. How do we support you to have strong governance, a mixed resource base on your board, and ensure there's a better understanding and clarity between the board and staff?*

*This is our space and we define it positively. We are focused on building leaders so that's why this year we have three representatives per organization. We want to fill the gaps so responsibility doesn't land on one person's shoulders. We are also strengthening organizations through the coaching program.*

*Networking and relationship building is very important.*

*Each person here is a huge resource. We can get support in different forms and share skills since we are working on similar issues. We encourage you to share lessons with one another.*

**NAFI CHINERY**

AWDF Capacity Building Specialist  
Welcome Message @ the CEO Forum



## The Concept of the Forum



**A key component of the African Women Development Fund's Capacity Building Program** is the annual Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Forum. The 4<sup>th</sup> convening was held 25 - 27 March 2015 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. The three-day forum brought together 29 women executives from ten (10) grantee organizations across Africa.

This forum focused on Leadership and Governance and took a unique turn from the previous convening by inviting three (3) members from each organization to work on building synergistic communicative systems within the organization. The three members consisted of the CEO or ED (Executive Director), a middle-level manager (or emerging leader of the organization) and a member of the Board of Directors. Following the forum, the organizations will embark on an 18-month coaching program with the lead facilitators from the convening, Hope Chigudu and Christine Gachu-Katee. The coaches will review systems and structures, provide guided direction to women executives and ensure teams are on track in developing leadership success and organizational viability.

The forum tapped women leaders working on three (3) core areas of engagement: Violence against women, Sexual health and reproductive rights and Economic empowerment and livelihoods. The overall vision of the forum is to achieve a feminist, political consciousness and powerful leaders who can transform the African continent, making friendlier and more secure places for women and girls to live. The immediate objective of the CEO Forum is to enable critical time for participants to discuss strategic leadership issues within their organizations, receive hands-on coaching, network as a practice within a supportive and encouraging environment, share successful strategies with other women leaders, and reflect on innovative solutions to implement in their work.



## AIR: CONNECTING THE MIND, BODY & SOUL OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

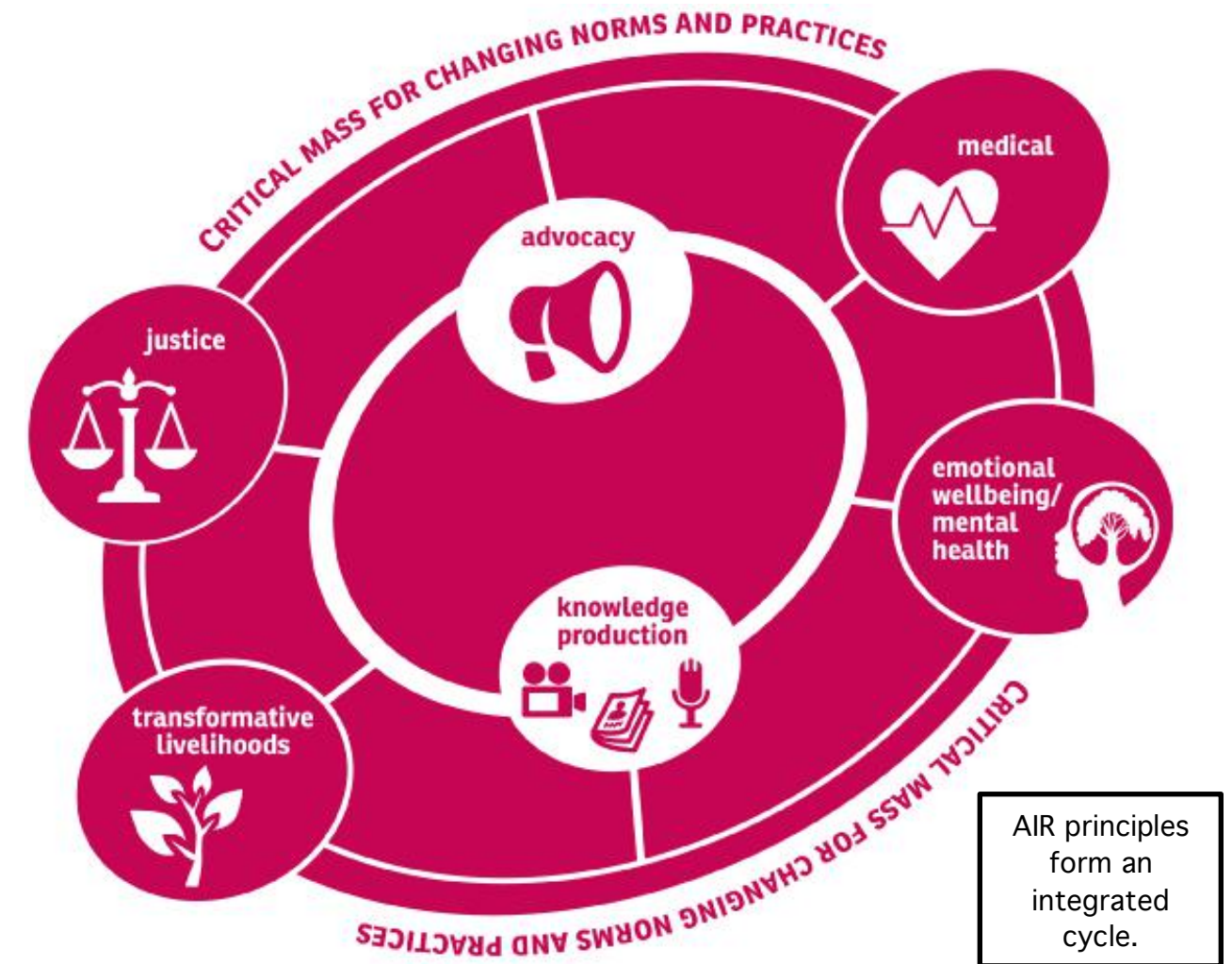
Last year's CEO Forum took a reflective look at the CEO as an individual leader and her relationship with coworkers, partners, the organization as a whole and larger communities. All change begins first with the self and then flows outwards to others. The convening focused on the need for balance and self-care by forming a healthy understanding of what it means to be a leader and to fully participate in the process of transformation on organizational and community levels.

This year's meeting extended the idea of care and balance by examining the relationship between CEO, board members and emerging leaders within the organization. As a starting point, we explored the concept of AIR, to understand the relationship between the mind, body and soul of living organisms. Developed by the African Institute for Integrated Responses Against Women & Girls & HIV/AIDS, AIR provides a framework to consider the comprehensive and interdependent capacities of the individual, organization and community.

AIR evolved from a request by a hospital in the DRC that had identified a dire need for counseling support for staff frequently dealing with patient issues of trauma and caregiving. The mission of AIR is to bring "together practitioner-activists to strengthen and share transformative feminist approaches to violence against women and girls, HIV/AIDS and emotional well-being/mental health in the African region."

The initiative took shape through funding provided by the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Graça Machel Trust with AWDF forming part of the steering committee for AIR.

AIR participants help devise multilevel responses to health issues. By focusing on how best to respond to crises and recognize impacts made, AIR collaborators work to prevent further issues by chipping away at the norms and practices that perpetuate violence and HIV-related inequalities in the first place. AIR provides medical assistance for women and girls affected by violence and HIV/AIDS with an eye towards creating emotional wellbeing and mental health, access to justice and routes to transformative livelihoods through the economic independence of women.



*Air is a precious and necessary resource that many people across the world take for granted. Air supplies living beings with oxygen, the essential means for our bodies to live and thrive.*

## HOPE'S SONG

Through multilayered work, AIR “*connects the disconnected dots across sectors while providing space for learning, reflection, new thinking and generating practical tools and resources by placing the well-being and security of service and care providers and women’s human rights defenders to heart.*”

*Are we young?  
What are we creating?  
What are we innovating?  
Where is your transformation?*

Hope Chigudu

Facilitator Hope Chigudu, used the AIR methodology during the forum to discuss her initiative, “Growing Organizations with a Soul.” This project examines how well connected staff and board are to the vision, mission and strategies of their organizations. Through this conversation, we focused on harnessing a culture of internal support, reflection, and critique with a goal towards nurturing innovative and unusual solutions to challenges facing our communication and development as organizations.



**I’m going to tell you a story.** In my tribe, when a woman knows she’s going to conceive a child she goes away into a field, forest or sits by the river and composes a song for her child who is not yet born.

As soon as she realizes she is pregnant, she teaches the song to her people - friends, sisters, peers - so as the stomach grows the song is sung for the unborn child. When she’s in the field, they sing the song. When she goes to fetch water, the song is sung. Wherever she is, the song is sung. When she goes into labor and the baby is dropped, the first thing this baby hears is the song. The baby grows up with this song.

This song is composed to guide the child throughout their lives. It’s used as a map when things are difficult. It’s composed to support her when parents die. It’s a song that supports her when she is on her own.

You know when you wake up and you say, “I’m finished. The world is finished - what can I do?” Remember your song. Sing it. It’s a song that reminds you of who you are. It reminds you to be proud of whom you are, where you came from, your origin. It’s an uplifting song - a song for the soul. So you know that anytime you’re down, when you are sucked from your work, you need this song because it’s a song for the soul.

Eventually as you get old and the bones are weak, you still need that song to wake you up in the morning. And eventually when life comes to an end and you are going back home to where you came from, that song is sung for you so that you will go in peace. You don’t go fighting, you just go calmly and safe.

Just as you need a song, organizations also need their own song.

*\* Hope shared this story during the forum.*



## GROWING ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SOUL

*When I've worked with women in conflict situations, women who've been raped or violated, they want a sense of control over their lives again. At that point, they are not particularly interested in talking through what has happened to them. They are more interested in being able to find a way to protect the people around them.*

*It's important to give economic security to their children, a physical security they can help put in place or access to justice in a safe way. It's a more holistic approach. Then they may want to talk to other women or community members about what happened to them and how they recovered physically, emotionally and intellectually. The responses depend on our definitions.*

**Theo Sowa**  
AWDF CEO

*An organization without a soul is fragmented. But we are in the business of happiness. How can we create happiness? How will you make another woman happy if you are not happy? We grow as our organizations grow.*

**Hope Chigudu**

### **Responses and strategies for healing from trauma can take varied approaches**

depending on cultural and geographical context. While western methodologies on trauma recovery are well documented and utilized all over the globe, the question remains whether or not these approaches work for African women. These methodologies tend to be based on individual rehabilitation and can be detached from the complex and diverse realities facing African women healing from conflict-prone or resource-strapped environments, as well as gender based violence, sexual violations, HIV/AIDS, and more. Since the formation of African communities is centered on collective experiences, the individual approach to trauma recovery presents critical gaps of interpretation, support, and meaning for African women and girls. Where are the markers for safety and protection, comfort and connection, and how can a life become stable again? In many cases, African women are concerned about how an individual experience of trauma impacts their family and larger communities as a whole.

This scenario demonstrates the importance of implementing African-innovated, community-based approaches to trauma, counseling and healing that determine solutions for all concerned. The “soul” of an organization also centers on outreach to surrounding communities. Are the particular needs of communities being addressed or are issues between individuals within the organization taking front and center? Staff and board members should be tuned in to the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization as a road map for reaching the right destinations.

To run efficient and effective organizations, we have to evaluate our collective needs on a regular basis. Through research and networking, we can identify practitioners and other experts for assistance and discover a diverse set of strategies to use in our work. Creative responses can be exchanged with other African women and organizations for further consultation and implementation. New, viable solutions can also be generated and adapted to address Africa-specific issues. During the forum, we shared how important it is to rely on and trust our own sense of authority to appropriately meet the challenges faced. Participants also acknowledged the need to document responses and processes of handling trauma and recovery as non-African methodologies have largely proven to be insufficient for our needs.

### **Tools to Provide Organizations with More Air**

*Here's a toolkit that participants shared to help organizations thrive:*

Strengthen the board's governance by providing oversight, direction and support for the organization

Build systems and structures

Engage in strategic planning

Develop M&E tools and systems to assess impact and measure outcomes

Evaluate management systems (staff, grants, and how the organization can proceed forward)

Refocus on the original vision of the organization

Define staff recruitment and retention processes

Train staff appropriately on new systems

Mobilize new resources

**UNDERSTAND YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SONG**

## THE POWER OF 3: INDIVIDUAL \* ORGANIZATION \* COMMUNITY

### What are some key takeaways on leadership and being an effective manager?

#### ANNE

You will need determination and a bold, audacious vision to help you follow through. Harness your energies toward this vision. Make weekly, monthly, and yearly goals to constantly set that vision with your team.

It would be good to identify early on the difference between leaders and managers. If we are all setting out to clear the bush, the leader must climb the highest tree in the forest to see the direction ahead and determine if we are in the right or wrong place. The role of the leader is to announce from the treetop if we are going in the right direction. The leader cuts the clearing and sends good energy to inspire everyone to move together. Managers ensure that the vision is grasped, utilized effectively and efficiently so that we are all able to leverage our resources in the right manner.

#### EVA

You have to be courageous. Dare to dream and think big. Be a solution provider in your space, focused to do it differently than it has been done before. Ensure that you are compliant with the law and mitigating the risk involved.

### *Experience and Lessons through the Journey: Inspiration on Leadership & Governance for Women Leaders*

This panel brought together three (3) accomplished women leaders in diverse fields to share their expertise on sustaining long-term organizations and businesses, creating successful partnerships, enhancing communication with staff and board members, and developing transformational leadership as a personal and organizational practice.

The panelists included **Eva Muraya** (CEO of Brand Strategy and Design Limited), **Anne Njogu** (former Chairperson of the Center for Rights Education and Awareness) and **Julie Akinyi Nyang'Aya** (Partner in Risk Consulting at Deloitte East Africa). **Dr. Awino Okech** (Senior Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg) moderated the panel.

What follows are key questions and answers generated during the panel Q&A with participants.



Top: Dr. Awino Okech moderates panel  
Bottom: Eva Muraya watches as Julie Akinyi Nyang'Aya speaks





Dr. Okech listens as Anne Njogu speaks.

## If you look back over your experience – what does it take to build a successful enterprise?

### EVA

I got into entrepreneurship shorthanded. I ate humble pie and signed up for business school. I thought, “Let me gain capability.” With capability comes a need for commitment. You have to approach it from the perspective of, “I am going to make a difference.” It won’t be done if we don’t speak it into character.

I’ve just launched a sixth business in brand communications. Compassion is important and means that we will build the capability of women to do business well. I must also have a commitment of purpose to my staff. A brand is a promise made and a promise kept.



TOP: Eva Muraya speaks on building enterprise  
BOTTOM: Anne Njogu discusses leadership.

## What keeps you motivated and moving past challenges?

### ANNE

Broaden your circle of influence and minimize your circle of concern.

### JULIE

You have to be resilient – find your personal strength. Love what you do. What do you want to achieve? Surround yourself with supportive people. Talk from a position of love and they will stay the course with you. If something is not working, you will have to do something different in order to get different results.

### EVA

Do you know that we have perhaps the most progressive procurement law in the world stitched into the Kenyan constitution? Every financial year, women, youth and persons with disabilities have access to government contracts valued, as per year, at 2.4 billion U.S. dollars. Can you imagine what that would translate into if it was in the hands of women, youth and persons with disabilities, in terms of healthcare, quality of life, and education?

How can we build linkages to markets for women? African women are not taught to gain the confidence and skills to do business with government. It is not at our disposal. We’ve been socialized to not know how to network, to be apologetic. But we shift the paradigm, we gain access and families, communities, societies, and nations benefit, especially at a GDP level. We must not be discriminated against on the basis of gender to access government contracts, credit or technical skilling.



**How do we build effective teams?  
Passion is critical but what is the range of other  
needs for building effectively?**

**EVA**

Visionary leadership is not for the faint-hearted. I can't tell you how many doors were slammed in my face. Be clear about your agenda. Choose the vehicle through which you will clearly articulate your message. Know your message and package it well. Insulate all the noise and clutter from naysayers. Stay with your bigger purpose – all the rest is noise.

**ANNE**

Passion is the key driver of what we do - without it, we are dead. Empathy is also necessary to connect to the people around you. You don't shortchange your institution by having a weak team around you. A good leader will always surround herself with some of the best brains. People will have different strengths than you in structures, systems, and how to build around the big dream. With the support of this team, your vision is carried out in a larger manner.

Recruitment is such an important process to bring the right people on board. When you recruit the best talent, your problems are half solved. Set up clear roles and responsibilities at the management level so you aren't crossing each other's paths. You must create a healthy balance and tension between the various functions.



**How do you determine and maintain  
staff responsibilities?**

**EVA**

Build measuring tools and processes into your leadership style and management strategies. What you don't measure, doesn't come. Benchmark around global strategies that have been successful.

NGOs need to rethink and restructure their plans. What's your retention strategy for staff? A paradigm shift is needed at this time for many non-profit organizations. Develop a business level acumen to accelerate your vision.

**JULIE**

We have to build sustainable organizations. Not everybody in the organization has to be a hero. Also fundraising can't be the only way the organization will run. How do we build institutions that outlast us? One of the greatest measures of success is how the organization looks after you're gone? If it collapses, then there's a problem.

Performance management is key - do you have the right people coming in? How do we ensure that we're actually attracting and selecting the best people for the job? How do you know if they are performing well? What is the evaluation process? Have the courage to let go if something's not working.





## Accountability is partly key to organizational success. What does it take to build the right board?

### ANNE

To build a sound board you will need strategy, resource people, and accountability at all levels. Set oversight. Think of including academics to inform research, media and public relations experts so that people understand your message and what you are about, finance people and those who can clearly articulate gender issues, as well as a good balance between young and older generations. There should be clear roles and functions for everyone. The CEO acts as gatekeeper to staff and operations while the board keeps the organization's vision and objectives in mind.

### JULIE

With accountability – don't ask of others what you can't do yourself. Also give the naysayer a chance because there may be something more to learn.

## How do you ensure you have the right organizational culture to articulate your vision?

### ANNE

What is your value system? Take apart the values one by one and have everyone contribute to the discussion. Do you have an open mind and can you take on new ideas? What brings in energy and what takes it away? You are always dealing with challenges with growth at each level. Have balance and diversify your team.

You must have excellence in whatever you do. Ethics and integrity are everything. You must build strategy and culture to take the vision forward. Without the two, it's difficult for your team to understand the direction you're going.





## OPEN DISCUSSION ON LEADERSHIP

*There's room to have a type a leadership where you're not alone on top of the tree. It's a shared vision, a collective leadership, but you are never alone, especially when making hard decisions.*

Theo Sowa



**In a special open session on leadership, participants had an opportunity to actively discuss with AWDF's**

**CEO**, Theo Sowa, about what characteristics define a strong leader. The group interrogated how leadership is a shared journey, reflecting on how collective leadership allows for support, value sharing and efficiency in completing a range of necessary responsibilities.

The organization forms a body with different parts working all in tune to the same vision. Having a lot of individual leaders attuned to different purposes, and not combining efforts towards a shared and collective process, can undermine the organization. This weakens the structure of activities that the organization is working towards completing. Therefore, it is crucial to strategize around building systems that are aligned, connected and interdependent.

Following this, participants discussed the differences that mark good management versus good leadership. Leaders may not have to pay close attention to the details as they are looking at the big picture overall, however, managers must be in line with the finer details. Participants shared the importance of having faith in your team and identifying core strengths and values that team members uniquely offer to the collective realization of an organization's vision. Some members hold the vision, others are charismatic, while some are good planners.

The CEO Forum doesn't just bring together leaders but *activist leaders*. What defines activist leadership? Participants spoke about a commitment to erect new paradigms of human relationships that create and sustain social equality, justice and protection to women and men. As leaders, boards have responsibilities but so do executives and organizational staff. Respect is key for all as well as dedication towards open, constructive feedback, integrity, accountability, and innovation.

Communication is also necessary to ensure that all team members understand what is required of them and that their contributions to the sustainability of the organization are recognized and valued.



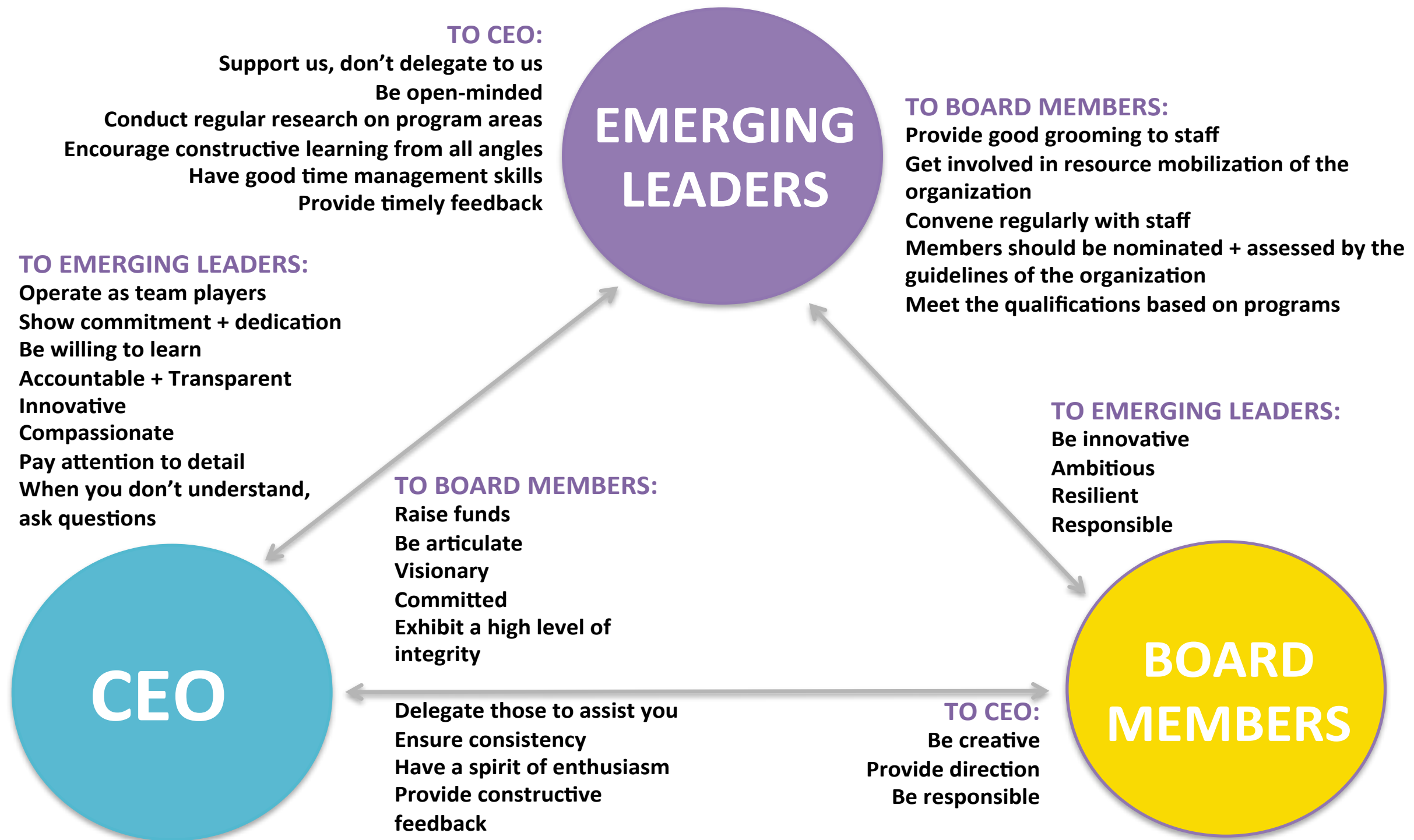
*We all are called to be leaders.  
Find your leadership core.  
What drives you, what keeps  
you honest and include other  
people who can help you along  
that path.*

Theo Sowa



# WHAT MAKES GOOD LEADERSHIP?

*Participants share what they expect of CEOs, Board members and emerging leaders within their organizations*



## THE POWER OF 3: CEO \* BOARD MEMBERS \* EMERGING LEADERS

### FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE

AWDF's CEO, Theo Sowa, led this intimate conversation with participants on identifying and growing governance as a ongoing practice for women's rights organizations. Governance is concerned with oversight and accountability and has programmatic, ethical and financial implications on the work we do.

We focused on looking at work by women's organizations as *activist leadership*. What are the pathways and decisions connected to this practice? To answer this question, each organization must examine how their vision is practically implemented and if there is tangible change experienced within their communities of focus.

Theo detailed how governance takes on a different structure for governments, the private sector and the CSO sector. Guidelines are needed around strategic oversight but this is meaningless without implementation. Citing her experiences in working with NGOs and being a board member at the age of 23, she expressed the need to know when you are out of your depth. By having clarity on the roles of board, CEO and staff members, guidelines can be keenly articulated, written and disseminated. Policies can take a broad shape so that they don't apply to certain people and provide loopholes for compromising actions. All organizational members should be on the same page and aware of whom is responsible for what duties. Proper criteria and procedures should be developed for the recruitment of boards, decisions that boards make versus decisions that the CEO makes, outlining a schedule of meetings and other important organizational activities.



### A Board can be strengthened through any of the following measures:

- Implement a skills audit at regular intervals to see where the gaps are and fill them in
- Create a self-evaluation for members and a board evaluation for the group
- Have an external resource person come in to handle board evaluations in an effort to minimize issues of power
- Develop and maintain clear, responsive guidelines and regulations that staff, CEO and board members are made accountable to understand and follow accordingly.

Governance is not only the concern of the board but all members of the organization. During the forum, participants shared how all organizational members can contribute to the governance process and make work an exciting and transformative practice.





ENERGIZING WELLNESS

*Every morning of the forum was dedicated to the practice of yoga with our instructor, Lillian.*

*This time allowed participants to personally and communally center, meditate, stretch and prepare for the day ahead.*







Theo Sowa records responses from participants on building healthy women's organizations.

*You need clarity about roles and clearly written commitments.*

*A terms of reference for board members that spells out responsibilities and expectations should be created. Also set generic policies that everyone must adhere.*

Theo Sowa

## GETTING BOARDS RIGHT

In discussing potential issues, we shared how money can be one of the biggest issues between boards and executives of women's organizations. Board membership in most countries should be voluntary. It is not a paid role, however, many private sector companies pay their members. Most large non-profit organizations and charities do not pay their boards.

Board members can even be asked to *give or get* the funds for the organization. This practice has been instituted at AWDF. However, many NGOs on the continent are struggling with finances so board members do a lot of work and, therefore, some expect to be paid. This is, however, a conflict of interest. Covering the expenses of board members is a given such as flights, accommodation and per diem during meetings or other obligations but anything more than that, is a violation of the vision and mission of the work women's organizations are accomplishing.

Part of the board's oversight is to make sure the organization is doing the work they are supposed to and that the organization is sustainable. The board has a critical role to play within the organization's resource mobilization strategies. The board forms part of the team (along with the CEO) that ensures necessary resources are there for use. Sometimes that's just opening doors to others since some board members may not have financial resources but possess significant networking connections that can be shared with the organization.

A diverse representation on boards is also a plus by identifying a range of persons who can contribute in different manners - financial management, research, organizational development, resource mobilization, communications and marketing, business enterprise or human resources. The more strengths that can be combined on one board, the better for the organization. This is the best measure to ensure that the organization grows and expands as a healthy and thriving people-based system.

It is not healthy for board members to be unresponsive to CEO or other staff concerns and issues, to insist on religious or unethical conformity, or to compete with staff in an effort to be hired by the organization. How can we make a dysfunctional board functional? Look to external support. We can build the boat even as we are sailing. Sometimes the issue can be a dysfunctional organization with unrealistic expectations about the board's responsibilities.



## WHAT DOES A HEALTHY WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATION LOOK LIKE?

*This is what participants had to say.*

Working through one task at a time. Do not overload yourself with too much work at a go.

Stay the course no matter what the challenge

Stay focused. Resist the temptation to take on too many programs or activities.

Prioritize responsibilities and share work among staff members.

The vision is shared and actively engaged among staff, CEO and board members.

Know your organization's main focus areas. Don't radically shift priorities in order to access more funding.

### Healthy Staff = Thriving Organization

Consider developing a wellbeing program for staff. This can include health screenings, massage therapy, aerobics exercise program, staff boxing program, health insurance scheme, or a salary package that includes a health focus.

Maximize connections with other stakeholders. Work with the intersectionalities of human rights issues in your organization's work.

Strengthen internal policies and systems, governance and regulations. Work as a team to shape a strategic framework.

It's important to experiment and try new and different things.

## COMMUNICATING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S BRAND EFFECTIVELY

On Day 2 of the CEO Forum, AWDF's Communications & Fundraising Specialist, Amba Mpoke-Bigg, led participants through two rounds of interactive communications exercises. Participants discussed how to develop an elevator pitch to communicate the vision and work of their organizations effectively to the media and public. Detailed during this session were the importance of speaking plainly without technical jargon, engaging viewers actively through passion, enthusiasm and sincere gestures, and utilizing a small timeframe to share the difference made by women organizations in their communities.

Assisted by Kenyan journalist Catherine Gathoni Kimotho, Amba led representatives from the ten (10) organizations through brief interviews about each organization's vision, objectives and activities. The interviews were filmed and reviewed by all to discuss what worked and what could be improved. This review process allowed the group to clearly identify messaging strategies that were effective at translating the work of women's organizations.

AWDF's Communications & Fundraising Specialist, Amba Mpoke-Bigg (bottom right), leads participants through two rounds of communications exercises.





## THE COACHING PROGRAM

**Building on the enthusiasm of exchange during the three-day forum,** facilitators Hope Chigudu and Christine Gachu-Katee led a closing session on the 18-month coaching program that would follow the workshop. This time was devoted to mentally preparing participants for the structure that the coaching program would require.

Participants discussed the importance of self-care, the critical need for balance, time and stress management, appreciation of self and others, as well as spending time and energy devoted towards developing one's own process as part of expanding the organizational structure. How do participants designate ample time for this process, particularly, with the demand of day-to-day responsibilities, technology and staff needs?

The central theme was the need to share responsibilities for the organization amongst staff members so that a few people were not overwhelmed by tasks. Together, participants could work to create change through the commitment of collective passion, energy and development of self, organizations and communities.

*I am a part of your change story.*

**Rabi Salifu**  
Project Officer  
Women Support and Activist  
Group (Ghana)

*Be curious in the not knowing and give yourself time to unpack all that you are learning and experiencing.*

**Christine Gachu-Katee**  
Facilitator

*If we don't have a governance structure and systems in place, the organization becomes loose. Organizations need a form or body to move well.*

*The coaching is confidential and meant to help your organization grow. You have to be truthful, transparent and accountable to the process.*

**Nafi Chinery**

## COACHING TOWARDS SUCCESS

Accountability is key to an effective coaching process, as well. There has to be active communication between coach and mentees so that the process will not drag and become stagnant. It's important to always been in dialogue even if it's to say, "Hey, I'm busy and I will get back to you," particularly since meetings take place via Skype.

Participants must also be honest with themselves about their strengths and shortcomings. By being self-aware at an inner conscious level and fully present in the moment, these women leaders would be best able to extract value from each part of the process.

The coaching process is also about creating time for the self, to be meditative and reflective about what is going well and what actions need further improvement. The coaching program is flexible in nature and is meant to support and enhance work performance. Therefore, the communication channels must be open and porous. Participants drive the process of coaching through their work and vision and they design and set the targets for getting there.

Finally, coaching requires time. Participants discussed how they were going to create and manage time to be fully present during the coaching sessions. The meet-ups with coaches will require 1 hour per month (via Skype call) and the completion of homework prior to the calls. The coaches will also visit each organization, meeting two days with the board, one day with staff and two days with the CEO.

# The 4 QUADRANTS OF CHANGE



*Upper Left:*  
**Purpose & Passion**

Why do I work?  
What has heart and meaning for me?  
What are my values?



*Upper Right:*  
**Action & Responsibility**

What effect do I make?  
What kind of footprint am I leaving?  
How do I efficiently use my resources, actions and skills?

Internal

External

*Lower Left:*  
**Story & Culture**

Where should we go?  
How do we preserve our social systems, traditions and shared beliefs?



*Lower Right:*  
**Structure & Systems**

How do we get there?  
How do we demonstrate wisdom in decision-making?  
How do we best evaluate the ecosystem?



Collective

How can we best discover our individual leadership style?

Facilitator Christine Gachu-Katee took participants through this exercise to find out.





## CREATING IMPACT: PARTICIPANTS SHARE EXPERIENCES OF THE CEO FORUM



“Governance was something I was blank about as well as getting to know how important the board is for my own personal growth. I have the desire to open a small organization one day myself. The earlier I know about the roles of the board the better this will help me in the quest. I will share the story of personal care with my fellow staff members. As leaders, we need very good relationships in our organizations. We need to connect, link, and share the vision so our organization can prosper.”

**LINDIWE JERE**  
Project Coordinator  
Girls Empowerment Network (GENET Malawi)



“I’m really glad to be part of this forum because it is an eye opener for my work. Personally, it is building my capacity on how to relate with people in my organization and how to do my work and articulate the best development of my organization. This forum is going to help with how I relate to my family, my spouse and my kids. I am beginning to now know whom I am, where I am from and how to relate to people who are oriented differently than I am. I’m glad that not only CEOs are here but also board members and other staff. It is revealing because as a human being, we don’t take time to get to understand ourselves.

This is helping me now to identify myself. It’s exciting to be here and I’m thankful to AWDF for giving my organization this great opportunity. How I relate to my staff will actually reflect the outcome of this work. It will change how we used to do things and make us better.”

**VIVIAN ADAMS NABIE**  
Executive Director  
Women Support and Activist Group (Ghana)





“This is a very lively forum and I have learnt a lot. The information we are getting here, we can use across the board even in our own personal ventures. We now know how to govern ourselves and consider the people we are working with to make a better organization. Looking at each person’s ability and how you can bring them together for each one to contribute for the good of the whole organization is important. We should be consistent in whatever we do. We shouldn’t jump when another idea comes. We should know our vision. What do we want to achieve? What do we want to see in the future? To develop and achieve our vision, what do we need to do so we work to that particular goal?”

Let’s now sit down and see what has worked for us, what has not and how we can improve on what we’ve been doing. For what has been a problem, let’s reconsider how we can improve.”

**MARGARET MUSIGA**  
Board Chairperson  
Africa Health and Community Program (Kenya)

“The most exciting session was on communication because it forms an integral part of what we do in our organization. We do the job but we are not able to communicate to the public, our partners, and donors. We were able to learn about the elevator pitch so that you quantify what you are doing for the public so they understand we’re actually touching people and changing lives. They need to be able to assess who we are.

The Governance part was insightful to understand that board members are necessary to help harness resources for the organization to move forward. This brings synergy between the board and staff. We can walk hand in hand – not everyone walking in isolation. One of our action points is to do complete an orientation meeting with our staff and board to let me know what we learned. We must recruit the needed people with the right skills. We will delegate in preparation for the coaching program. This will provide a springboard for us to move forward in our leadership and governance of the organization.”

**DORIS BRENDAN**  
Executive Director  
Heal the Land Initiative (Nigeria)





## KEY INTERVENTIONS: Lessons Learned from the First Three Forums

### 1<sup>st</sup> CEO Forum: Leadership and Management 2009



#### FOCUS:

Interrogate and analyze the internal organizational strengths and challenges facing women's organizations in Africa since 1985 and explore the best strategies to address and limit issues.



#### TAKEAWAYS:

- There is dire need for sustained dialogue to strengthen women leaders and organizations to better manage the effects of global and domestic policies and practices of governance, peace and security, climate change, as well as challenges like access to clean water, health services, land and food security, violence, exploitation, disease, exclusion, and discrimination, as frequent threats to the lives and work of women
- Provide a unique space for collective thinking, analysis and strategizing on the current leadership and management challenges facing women's organizations
- Address challenges affecting women's organizations within the framework of African feminism, particularly using *The Feminist Charter* as an organizational development tool

### 2<sup>nd</sup> CEO Forum: Leadership and Management 2011



#### FOCUS:

Develop strategies that address challenges obstructing the organizational development and sustainability for regional and sub-regional women's rights organizations in Africa.



#### TAKEAWAYS:

- Develop and review a sustainable finance strategy and capacity building plan for organizational sustainability
- Generate succession strategies for effective transition between leaderships
- Strengthen board governance and resource mobilization efforts of the organization
- Use social media as a mobilizing communicative vehicle for women's organizations
- Facilitate asset acquisitions and development, create institutional business plans
- Coordinate and organize national feminist forums and set up communities of practice

### 3<sup>rd</sup> CEO Forum: Leadership, Governance and Communication for CEOs of Women Organizations 2014



#### FOCUS:

Share skills and reflect on the diverse leadership capacities of African women. Engage in a 10-month coaching program to sharpen areas where additional support is needed for African women leaders.



#### TAKEAWAYS:

- Engage with women executives from different countries and leadership sectors and exchange lessons
- Form a clear feminist ideology and develop key messages for the media about the work of women leaders and organizations
- Develop keen processes on grounding, self-care and well-being, leadership succession, integrity and accountability, courage and resolve, consistency, managing work relations, financial sustainability, and disconnects between rural and urban-based women
- Common vision and goal setting as ongoing practices engaging the CEO, Board and staff will reduce fractured communication

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