Leadership is often mentioned in interviews as being among the most important competences developed through the Diploma, and it appears as a key takeaway from the graduates’ journey at JWL. Whether through identifying qualities of good leaders or giving examples of leadership from their experiences, leadership is identified as a multidimensional existential competence relying on sets of values, knowledge, and motivation. This chapter will guide us through graduates’ perspective on the definition of leadership, the key characteristics of a leader, the path to build leadership and the outcomes of being a good leader.

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# Table of Contents

1 LEADERSHIP ACCORDING TO GRADUATES ........................................................................... 3
   1.1 GOOD VS. BAD LEADERSHIP .................................................................................. 3
   1.2 LEADER OF ONESelf ............................................................................................... 3
   1.3 LEADER OF OTHERS - COMMUNITY, WORK, FAMILY ............................................ 4

2 THE FEATURE OF A LEADER ......................................................................................... 6
   2.1 STYLE OF LEADERSHIP .......................................................................................... 6
      2.1.1 Servant leader .................................................................................................. 6
      2.1.2 Leading by example ......................................................................................... 6
   2.2 VALUES .................................................................................................................... 7
      2.2.1 Courage ............................................................................................................. 7
      2.2.2 Humility ........................................................................................................... 9
      2.2.3 Honesty ........................................................................................................... 9
      2.2.4 Empathy and patience ...................................................................................... 9
      2.2.5 Integrity and equality: just, fair, and impartial .................................................. 10
      2.2.6 Responsibility .................................................................................................. 10
   2.3 SKILLS ..................................................................................................................... 11
      2.3.1 Collective work ................................................................................................. 11
      2.3.2 Problem-solving .............................................................................................. 11
      2.3.3 Critical thinking .............................................................................................. 12
      2.3.4 Communication and public speaking skills ....................................................... 12

3 THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP ...................................................................................... 13

4 THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A LEADER ............................................................... 14

5 CONCLUSION .............................................................................................................. 16

6 REFERENCES .............................................................................................................. 17

7 AUTHORS .................................................................................................................... 18
1 Leadership according to graduates

Participants’ understanding of leadership encompasses a multifaceted and value-based meaning, reflected in a continuum differentiating good from bad leadership.

1.1 Good vs. bad leadership

First, leadership is often perceived from an evaluative standpoint which allows graduates to identify the defining factors of good leadership from bad leadership. To do this, they often start by defining what good leadership is not. For example, a graduate in Kenya expresses those leaders who have “no sense on how to bring people together” and deal with hatred and discrimination should change their style of leadership to avoid such inequality in the communities (KK_A4_MZ). For this other participant in Malawi, having leadership does not equate to being a good leader as: “They have an illusion about that what they think is leader. They’re not leaders and if many organisations today [...] are not succeeding, it’s because of the lack of leadership skills [...] if I’m to examine, to define what leadership is, leadership, I can say it’s the way you save, it’s the way you rule others. It can be in a bad way or in a good way. [...] I learned about servant leadership. Not everyone is a servant leader.” (KK_A4_MZ)

This recognition that having strong leadership is not dependent on titles or positions but instead on the way the community is cared for, opens new dimensions of understanding of what a good leader is.

Frequently, graduates refer to examples of good leaders that they studied during the Diploma, like Mandela, Gandhi, and Maathai (MD_A1_F). Some of the characteristics emerging from their analysis of good leadership during the Diploma are the interconnected abilities to encourage others and be positive. This graduate explains this interlinkage by expressing the need for good leaders “not to focus on the negativity of individuals” but instead “[on the] positivity of individuals” to encourage others and turn them into good leaders. (KK_A19_MZ). This willingness to bring out the best in people and spread a wave of good leaders is illustrated in the words of this graduate in Malawi who shares how other leaders have inspired him to improve his leadership:

“Mandela has done it and his leadership have motivated [me] to be a good leader, a leader who work and who can die for saving lives of others” (MD_A1_F).

Hence, from the knowledge gained in the Diploma about leadership, alumni reflect on the meaning of leadership by differentiating good leaders from bad leaders through good leaders’ unique capacity to give hope to others and bring out the best in everyone.

1.2 Leader of oneself

Graduates reveal that being a good leader is not only about leading others, but also...
requires leaders to effectively lead themselves. Perceived as an innate tool that one has to hold on to and develop throughout life, leadership is a reflexive competence that allows one to guide one’s future. This alumnus in Malawi elaborates this thought further by intertwining the concept of leadership to the power of learning:

“When you believe that life is for learning from one another, this is whereby you start realising the power of leadership, you come to understand that everyone was born a leader but then it is up to each and every individual to decide how to be that leader.” (MD_A2_T)

While this perspective highlights the impact of JWL on realising one’s in-born leadership, this graduate proposes a more intrinsic process of leadership applicable to any given situation, even when following a leader:

“Leadership comes out from you as person, not only when you are leading, but also when you are [following] a leadership. We have a mentality of saying the leaders are those in the position, forgetting we [are] our own leaders by showing an example that can even inspire the leaders who are in the position.”

— KK_A1_G

1.3 Leader of others - community, work, family

Graduates’ narratives mostly refer to leadership being deployed to serve others, fulfilling a vision and purpose. This participant in Afghanistan expresses the value of his role as a leader:

“When I am working as a leader, I am directing people, motivating people and helping them to where it is needed. Also, when I am at home. I can give motivation to my family and my friends and my community.” (AH_A2_N)

He also speaks about leadership as being applicable to different contexts: “I am a leader of myself, I am the leader of my family, and I am the leader of my friends” (AH_A2_N).

This multidimensional aspect of leadership is also identified in other interviews. While this graduate mentions family and community as areas of leadership, others refer to professional life. For instance, this English teacher in Afghanistan shares how the Diploma helped her build leadership skills:

“As I said, leadership in online Diploma, it helps me to have a good management in my class and employed those good characteristics of a great leader in my leadership.” (AH_A1_O)

Whether in alumni’s respective communities, their family or professional lives, graduates demonstrated that leadership can be practiced in many spheres of daily life. At the community level, this graduate in Kenya reveals the effect of the Diploma on leadership skills (KK_A16_MZ). She articulates this impact in terms of a growth of agency in her community:
This reflection highlights the transition from being unconscious of her leadership potential to mindfully becoming a leader among her community through the support of the Diploma. Thus, after grasping commitment and motivation within themselves with the help of the Diploma, graduates describe leadership as a tool oriented to serve others.

“Before I was enrolled to the Diploma, I thought that everything was impossible. [...] I couldn't even take any initiative to play in a role in the community. But when I passed through the Diploma and I also learned the course called leadership, I became aware of what is of me, what I should do at least to bring change in the community and that's how I accepted the role of being a leader in the community.”

– KK_A16_MZ

Figure 1: Graduates in Iraq showing leadership skills in a community tree planting activity
2 The feature of a leader

While leadership can be considered as a distinct competence, graduates state that in order to be a leader, one must have a specific set of styles, skills, and values, in line with features also identified by the literature (Boone 2018; Morgan, 2020; Mumford and Higgs, 2019).

2.1 Style of leadership

Graduates identify certain leadership styles as crucial elements to become a good leader.

2.1.1 Servant leader

One of the key styles of leadership that participants recurrently mentioned is servant leadership. Furthering the findings of Greenleaf and Spears (1998), and Blanchard and Broadwell (2018) on servant leadership, graduates’ perspectives develop an idea of leadership that encompasses the notion and objective of serving others. In the words of this graduate living in Jordan, "leadership is not about you! It is about you and others!” (JA_A5_A). While leadership is oriented toward others, one graduate explains that acquiring an education means "at the service of others" which also means to be a leader, "but a servant leader!” (MD_A4_L). This graduate in Malawi provides an account of servant leadership:

"A man who died recently […], who was living with stroke since 2012, he died in 2018 because he was not able to control himself. It’s why since 2012 I have helped him. I washed him three times a week during six years, 3 times a week is the sense of having humanness to understand the community and to do something. Especially when you see someone is abandoned, you can approach him in order to tell him to have courage, to have patience, and to continue to live even though the life is very difficult.” (MD_A4_L)

Therefore, this graduate exemplifies that as a leader, one should be willing to take on true commitment to help others and support them in solving their issues. This graduate in Kenya further elaborates this thought:

"As a leader, you have to accept that you are for the people, and the people will be for you if only you are for them, and you are addressing their issues, and they trust you” (KK_A7_JR).

This inseparable bound between the people and oneself is therefore the key characteristic of a servant leader.

2.1.2 Leading by example

Intertwined with the idea of responsibility towards others, being a role model is perceived as an essential attribute to being a good leader. This graduate highlights this perspective as he defines that "a good leader must be a good example in the society, so I always try [...] to be a good example, a role model" (MD_A1_R). As leading by example becomes the norm for these graduates (KK_A10_MZ), this alumnus in Kenya gives an example in which he acted as a role model by not fighting back when his neighbours did not respect his home perimeter:

"It was not easy because you know we are living differently, we are Congolese, they are South Sudanese […]. As I told you, I was a role model […] they consumed some meters on my compound and I respected it and […] they expected me to quarrel […] but I kept quiet, and this showed them the spirit of Ubuntu which is inside me. When I called them, everybody responded and I started telling them the way we are living is not better, [all of us are refugees], we have to ameliorate our life by doing this, […] we have to find first of all the roots of the problem […] It was not easy, so far, as you can see the community is very calm, probably if that is not the case, you could hear some shout within the community in this neighbourhood but thank god, the empowerment I got from JWL, it assisted me to implement to what I’m talking to you currently” (KK_A5_JR)
This same motivation to become an example for the community is articulated by this participant in Malawi, who emphasises the role of the Diploma in inspiring other women in her community to pursue their educational goals:

"I got some leadership skills in the sense that in my society, I’m considered as a leader and […] most of people […] they do discourage their daughters to go to school or to go further with education, believing that after education they won’t be employed. They will just remain at home and get married and start taking care of children. But me, I’m a good example of leadership in the sense that I go in the camp and then, try to sensitise the community concerning women or girl’s education, giving them my example [that if] […] I didn’t reach diploma, I wouldn’t be able to get this job that I’m doing here. And as a female, due to my studies, […] I’m able to even support my family financially due to education, so women can also be leaders.” (MD_A6_R)

Therefore, setting the standards of good leadership through examples appears to be one of the virtues of a good leader for alumni of the Diploma programme.

2.2 Values
2.2.1 Courage
In line with the findings of Lowney (2009) regarding servant leadership, participants identify courage as one of the important values of a leader. This aspect is prominent in interviews conducted in Jordan, encapsulating 30% of the quotes related to courage. According to interviews, leaders may face difficult challenges, often associated with important risks that will require them to demonstrate their courage. For example, this graduate from Afghanistan sees her courage as leadership through her potentially dangerous work commute:

“One of the risks that I have taken is traveling to Kabul. Because you know the situation of Afghanistan is not good, especially traveling from Bamiyan to Kabul. It is a big risk that I’m taking every time.” (AB_A4_O)

As she defines courage through her ability to take the risk of experiencing a difficult situation, she reminisces that through her studies at the Diploma that courage was one of the key characteristics of being a leader (AB_A4_O). In addition to overcoming fear, courage requires resilience. This same Afghan participant shares her professional progression was only possible because of her determination to succeed:

“We have to never give up and we have to take risks and we have to start from the less and we have to be satisfied with even in small things you do so […] So first I was a student, by hard and hard-working […] I could be the leader and I’m leading […] centres now.” (AB_A4_O)
Leadership is slightly more prevalent in female interviews as 56% of the quotes related to this code from female participants. While this percentage gap can be considered relatively small, it can still help us to better understand how leadership is experienced differently by female and male graduates. The quotes related to the children-codes of ‘public speaking’ (61%) are particularly relevant for females. This difference may suggest that female participants apply their leadership skill as a tool not only to find their voice (AB_A10_H), but also to inspire other women to access education and take leadership roles in their communities (MD_A6_R, IE_A4_M, AB_A2_O, IE_A2_M). Despite living in societies where it is often challenging for women to practice leadership, female participants highlight their leadership skills in terms of encouraging other women to pursue education and reach new professional horizons.

Compared to female participants, males more frequently refer to ideas of collective work (62% of the quotes linked to this theme were mentioned by males). One interpretation of this difference could be that the focus is on a more classical understanding of leadership, where a leader manages a team. However, the emphasis seems to be placed on teamwork rather than the leader’s personality, given the importance of humility in shaping the core understanding of leadership.

Figure 2: Analysis of some of the quotes related to leadership by gender
2.2.2 Humility

Humility is understood as a core value of a good leader by participants. This alumnus from Kenya illustrates this link between leadership and humility as he is conscious that:

“[…] even with your achievement, you should be humble, down to earth […] Wherever I go, let me not be defined by my position but my action” (KK_A1_G)

and concludes by highlighting the interconnection between servant leadership and humility:

“One thing this programme instilled in me is humility. Serving people with humility. I am grateful for the effort of JWL” (KK_A1_G)

This intertwining of humility and servant leadership translates through the willingness of the participants to evaluate one’s leadership from the perspective of the people that they are serving. A graduate in Malawi exemplified this point as he is shared that it is not up to him to tell whether he is a good leader, but rather up to the person that he is serving to decide on his leadership competence (MD_A2_T).

In this context, feedback becomes crucial to building good leadership. Receiving feedback is understood as the key element to know the quality of one’s leadership, (KK_A8_MZ). Therefore, participants show that their willingness to seek feedback mirrors their humility as leaders that accept and welcome others’ opinions.

However, this form of humility can ultimately result in some graduates not recognising their role as leaders despite demonstrated examples of leadership. Although conscious of his leadership skills in a project in which he helped develop courses in Kabul, this graduate responded as follows to the question about whether he sees himself as an agent of change:

“I cannot frankly tell that I am an agent of change because I, with the changes we have, […] We know, I am very far away of change. Though I have changed, but still, I cannot, I cannot you know, call myself an agent of change.” (AB_A12_H)

The minimisation of his proven leadership skills reflects his humility to acknowledge his leadership role. Thus, humility appears as an essential quality for a good leader, even when the weight of the leader’s actions can be minimised.

2.2.3 Honesty

Closely related to humility is the value of honesty, also crucial for a good leader. For this graduate in Afghanistan, honesty is identified as the first step to becoming a good leader. She recalls her learning experience in the Diploma: “I know that a leader should be first honest in her/his community” (AB_A2_H). This crucial importance given to honesty is furthered by the willingness to be transparent with one’s community. A participant specifies the need to solve issues peacefully and in a transparent manner:

“If there’s something you want to change, do it pacifically. Just sit with them and show them […]. If this one goes like this and this problem would happen, […] They will understand, instead of going there and decide on your own and you come to impose: ‘this is supposed to be like this, and this is supposed to be this’. They will strike, and you will not be good times.” (KK_A8_MZ).

2.2.4 Empathy and patience

According to participants, another significant part of being a good leader is to develop empathy and patience. The aforementioned graduate already hints at this need to develop mutual understanding between the leader and the community through transparent communication (KK_A8_MZ). This idea of an empathetic
and respectful relationship may eventually lead to trust between actors involved. This alumnus speaks about the idea of tolerance and patience to reflect this new relationship between leaders and the people:

“You have to possess the character of tolerance and you have to also be patient, [...] because everything does not come in a short time, it comes in a long, long, long way and you have to be somebody who’s hard working” (KK_A6_MZ).

Therefore, possessing an empathetic and patient attitude toward one’s community is perceived as vital to develop positive leadership.

2.2.5 Integrity and equality: just, fair, and impartial

From graduates’ perspective, a good leader should also possess qualities of integrity and equality. In the words of a graduate in Kenya, a leader must:

“[…] be a person with integrity, a person must be exemplary to the people because as a leader, you must ensure that you love everyone. A leader must be fair to everyone. A leader must not discriminate. A leader must not be greedy, and it must not be corrupted. […] a leader must be transparent especially dealing with the issues to do with money” (KK_A13_MZ).

This enumeration of a good leader’s qualities is centred on the values of impartiality and fairness. By accentuating facilitation as a technique to achieve high standards of morale into practice, this graduate in Kenya depicted the role of impartiality to develop efficient leadership style when discussing a hypothetical challenge between two communities:

“Only my work is to moderate, to ensure they come to conclusion, we will not enforce anything. As a leader, you are not supposed to take sides, because when you take sides, you are going to make things worse, you are going to make them escalate and it will get out of hand so that my [understanding of] leadership is.” (KK_A3_G)

2.2.6 Responsibility

Responsibility is understood by alumni as one key component of leadership. One graduate explains that:

“Before doing the Diploma, you know I was an irresponsible person, I was just doing things in a hurry or in a way I was not caring about that one. But after the Diploma, I think I got the feeling of, you know, to be responsible for the things that I do and for having a good community” (AB_A6_H).

This is particularly salient in the context of Afghanistan as 28% of the quotes related to ‘responsibility’ come from this country. In Afghanistan, many participants shared their difficulty in accessing education (particularly for women) and how they often had to challenge other members of their communities in order to attend the programme. They often referred to the responsibility to set a new standard for other girls seeking to pursue their education (AB_A10_H, AB_A4_H, AB_A2_O).

This feeling of responsibility, supported with the teachings of the Diploma, can eventually encourage graduates to take further leadership roles in other spheres of life. The alumna in Malawi expresses this by suggesting that:

“Before you start leading somebody, you have to start from somewhere. That somewhere must be from somewhere. That somewhere must be from you first of all, then the next door, then the entire community within. So, leadership helped me to release keys to others.”

– MD_A3_F
This willingness to care for others and one’s environment is illustrated in the example of one graduate in Afghanistan, mentioning that if one sees a bottle on the road as he explains:

"It is our responsibility and it is our community that we have [...] to take that bottle and put that [...] in a wastebasket and through that, I can make him understand that we should be having [...] a feeling to concern about our community" (AB_A6_H).

This responsibility toward the community is emphasised from the perspective of a community elder in Kenya, who is renamed ‘Mr JWL’ as he is consulted by zonal and block leaders before any community decision-making (KK_A9_G). Therefore, the importance given to the community through responsibility-sharing is one pivotal aspect that makes as a ‘good’ leader, according to graduates.

2.3 Skills

In addition to having specific sets of values, graduates identify a set of skills that are essential to practice good leadership. Supported by the research findings of Riggio and Tan (2013), graduates identify the four following soft skills as major components of their leadership competence: collective work, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills.

2.3.1 Collective work

First, collective work management is identified as a key element to develop good leadership skills. This aspect of leadership seems to be particularly relevant for participants in Jordan as their excerpts represent 32% of the quotes related to collective work. Highlighting the (MD_A8_F), graduates understand that good leaders “seek for advice from the rest of the people” (KK_A16_MZ). This teamwork approach relies on the value of equality among team members. This alumnus states that in order to develop strong teamwork, equality should be set as a basic standard:

“We all feel equal, and we equally empowered in sharing our ideas even communicating and that’s really helpful for me as a leader having good connection and good interaction [...] with all the people I’m working with and with all the people I’m living with, in the community” (KK_A5_MZ).

This collective approach can even alleviate some of the burdens that leadership brings. For example, this graduate explains that before the Diploma,

“[…] I was doing everything alone but [...] after getting knowledge from Diploma, I have now delegated some responsibility to other people and all work went well and also I was set free”. (KK_A7_R)

2.3.2 Problem-solving

Additionally, graduates pinpoint problem-solving as one of the skills that a good leader should have. For this graduate, evaluating one’s leadership should be solely based on one’s ability to resolve conflict:

“It is not easy to describe yourself, I have to show people how I proceed in decision making in my leadership. The way that I can explain someone how I am a good leader is the way I resolve conflict. Then you can describe that someone is a good leader.” (MD_A4_R)

This graduate in Kenya emphasises this skill by elaborating on the approach one should take when solving problems:

“When solving problems as a leader, [...] first of all you have to avoid being discriminating people. You have to be humble when solving problems. You don’t have to be rude in what you are doing. So that people will feel at least at
home when you are solving problems [...]. You have to solve problems equally without favouring others as the leader.” (KK_A15_MZ)

Encompassing values of equality, humility, and interreligious/cultural sensitivity, problem-solving emerges as a key feature of graduates’ approach to critical thinking. Therefore, problem-solving skills are presented as intrinsic to leadership, as in the words of this graduate in Malawi:

“[...] leadership is about taking the lead in solving problems [...]” (MD_A5_F)

2.3.3 Critical thinking

Furthermore, critical thinking is seen as a key characteristic of a good leader. From the perspective of this participant in Malawi, critical thinking can be defined based on leadership. He states that “critical thinking is a fact that you understand something, and you guide or lead [...] in a good manner,” (MD_A7_F). Therefore, from this viewpoint, critical thinking appears to be a mindset that permits leadership development.

2.3.4 Communication and public speaking skills

Lastly, according to interviewees, communication skills seem to be one of the most important skills a leader should have. This is particularly reflected in the context of Afghanistan as 32% of the quotes linked to ‘public speaking’ are from participants in this country. This graduate who held a chair position in the Human Rights Council in a refugee camp in Malawi and leads a social and economic movement in his home country unveils the relevance of communication within leadership:

“Communication is one of the keys [to avoid conflict]. The heads should communicate with their toes. Yeah, the chair should communicate with the cleaner. Yes, the director of the company should have a very good communication with [his] workers. Or any leader must have like effective communication with the followers. That’s the most important thing, because from communication, you will be able to discover the deficit [...] that you have, like the challenges which people have.” (MD_A1_HD)

While communication can be understood as a crucial tool to develop leadership for the community, it can also be for the benefit of one’s life. Particularly, public speaking seems to be influential for some graduates in terms of building their self-confidence and developing leadership skills (AB_A4_H, AB_A10_H, IE_A2_M). For example, this graduate in Iraq shares that before the Diploma, she was shy and did not know what to say and how to deal with people. But after the Diploma, she explains that she can go anywhere, talk with anyone, and do everything (IE_A2_M). Another graduate, sharing a similar experience of fear of public speaking prior to the Diploma, mentions that:

“Now even if I speak among thousands and millions of people, I do not feel such kind of way. I’m very brave, I’m strong and I can believe on myself and I can do whatever I want.” (AB_A10_H)

This liberation of the voice of graduates reveals the influential role of the Diploma on their leadership and self-confidence. Hence, graduates recognise the importance of strong communication skills to build strong leadership.
3 The path to leadership

During the interviews, graduates shared how gaining knowledge and skills particularly helped them to develop their leadership competence. While alumni pinpoint two main ways to learn about and build leadership, there is a clear consciousness that “knowledge equals power” (MD_A10_F), and therefore developing leadership through knowledge can lead to developing one’s self-confidence and potentially becoming empowered (MD_A6_R, KK_A5_MZ, MD_A1_HD). For example, this graduate shares how:

“[the Diploma] has empowered [me]. It has helped me in terms of leadership. Because [...] this is the truth from my heart. It was my first time to discover what is leadership.” (MD_A1_HD)

This self-transformation through knowledge highlights the value of the teachings of the Diploma in shaping a basic understanding of leadership and how to develop one’s own competencies in that area. While the Diploma is generally mentioned as shaping one’s approach to leadership, the course named ‘Leadership’ is frequently referred to by graduates as an important milestone in their leadership development. For instance, this graduate in Kenya explains that:

“It helped us to know the qualities of a good leader, how to become a good leader, how to lead people. So leadership, it mainly helped me in my academic journey like for example joining student-based organisations, it is a student leadership. So how you approach students matters a lot. How you deal with everyone’s how you interact with everyone’s, how you lead them, not only in the school, not only in the institution but also in a community” (KK_A13_R).

This widening of perspectives on what leadership means through the teachings of the Diploma is also explored through peer learning. This graduate in Malawi demonstrates the efficacy of learning from one another to develop leadership:

“The first thing I learnt from JWL is every time to believe that we learn from one another, when you believe that life is for learning from one another, this is whereby you start realising the power of leadership.”

– MD_A2_T

While knowledge about leadership can be gained from books and lectures, it is also understood as being built through peer learning. Thus, according to interviews, graduates could develop their leadership through the teachings of JWL in the learning environment available to them both onsite and through the global virtual classroom.
4 The consequences of being a leader

After sharing their understanding of what leadership is, what the values of a good leader are and how they developed their leadership skills, graduates shared their perspectives on the consequences of being a leader.

Finding one’s voice or carrying and amplifying the voice of the voiceless is one consequence in which graduates find their leadership potential tested. This refugee in Jordan expresses that:

“Many communities have been affected with the war in their country, and they don’t have a chance to show the voice to the world. I see that from the readings from the paper I do, interacting with them and within that it gives me the courage that to be in their voice. But also, I don’t have a chance to practice right now, but when I got the opportunity, I can do it.” (JA_A2_A)

While this participant is limited by political and social factors in Jordan in expressing and applying his leadership, his readiness to take on the responsibility to amplify community voices reveals the courage of the graduate to address social issues in this context.

This resilient feeling is also shared by this participant in Malawi who expressed how he used the teachings of the Diploma to build leadership and a courageous spirit:

[the Diploma] did support my leadership skills. In the first place, I would think how I can do a lot of things if I had an opportunity, but now with JWL’s teachings and how they are training us, they have been giving us the spirit to try out that
thing you want to do and put it in action to be the leader you want to be. And truly I think with JWL, after I started operating my own project, I realised that truly JWL has a great role to play.” (MD_A2_T)

“This form of empowerment through leadership can be translated in terms of self-confidence. Whether it is through voicing out a concern or standing in front of a public delivering a speech, self-confidence appears as a key consequence of performing a leadership role. For example, this block leader shares that before she joined the Diploma, she was always afraid to face other block leaders, always putting her head down when addressing them (KK_A7_G). But after she joined the Diploma, she became more confident, “very strong” and “happy again” (KK_A7_G). She adds that this inspired her “to stand for the voiceless,” as she became a community caseworker (particularly fighting against gender-based violence). She illustrates this transformation through the following example:

“Here in block 11, people like drinking, and fighting for no reason and men are beating their wives, and girls are being raped, and theft, I remember I put down and talk to them. I asked myself what made me this way, I remembered oh, it was the community advocacy in the Diploma it has really impacted me.” (KK_A7_G).

She concludes by highlighting that this overcoming of challenges made her feel more important, confident and a better leader than when she first joined the Diploma:

This example highlights the impact of the Diploma in shaping this personal growth through developing the intrinsic skills of leadership and confidence simultaneously. Thus, through many examples of community leadership, graduates articulate their willingness to not only amplify their own voices, but also those of the communities and marginalised people. This personal growth and increase in self-confidence are therefore the consequence of the leadership skills gained through the Diploma.

“Many have been asking me who brings you up to this level. I do tell them it’s JWL. They asked me is JWL a person? We want to talk to JWL. We were two Uganda graduated from JWL and our achievements become a story of the day. I was breastfeeding by then. The example they would give was ‘look at her she is a mother of three and she has done a lot no man in this community tried. What about you? You have opportunity here in the camp.’ I became [...] a reference and consultant. I feel big.”

– KK_A7_G
5 Conclusion

Leadership appears as an essential competence that graduates develop during their JWL journey. Whether gaining a strong understanding of leadership in class, developing related values and skills, or building self-confidence, alumni often perceive leadership as one of the key takeaways of the Diploma programme. While critical thinking is the mindset that enables one to plan for actions, leadership applies critical thinking to serve a specific purpose. In the case of JWL graduates, this transition from critical thinking to leadership is not only emancipating for the leader, but also their communities.

Key points

- Leadership is one of the most important impacts of JWL’s Diploma programme as it affects not only graduates, but also the communities they serve.
- Alumni nuance distinct types of leadership, with a special focus on servant leadership.
- Graduates’ perspective on leadership encompasses a set of styles, values and skills, including servant leadership, leading by examples, honesty, humility, courage, equality, empathy, responsibility, collective work, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- The knowledge and skills acquired through the Diploma are understood as critical to developing leadership.
- Graduates share that their leadership experiences in various spheres of their life can result in personal growth and an increase in self-confidence.
6 References


7 Authors

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