Graduate School of BUSINESS UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN | MPhil

Succession Planning for Leadership Transformation for South African Non-Profit Organisations

A Dissertation

presented to

The **Master of Philosophy (MPhil)**

Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town

In fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in Inclusive Innovation

by

Este Buchholz
BCHEST001

January, 2024

Supervisor: Dr Babar Dharani

Acknowledgements

My gratitude to Dr Babar Dharani for his enthusiastic interest in my research, his ongoing support and his caring manner during the last 2,5 years.

To my friends and family who never got bored of me discussing my studies or declining an invitation because of it, thank you for your patience and encouragement.

Thank you to my two lovely children, Erwin and Therese Buchholz, who never once expressed resentment because their mother spent another weekend behind her desk.

Last but certainly not least, I am infinitely grateful for the unwavering support of my husband, Walter Buchholz, throughout this journey. He has been my tireless champion, sounding board, proofreader, and editor. I could not have done this without him.

Abstract

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) play a vital role in South African society, providing critical services for many underserved and marginalised communities. Despite the evidence of the importance of NPOs in transforming the South African economy and society, there is very little research on succession planning for executive leadership transformation within this sector. The Literature on this topic is primarily based on case studies from other countries. South African studies were conducted in the public or private sector, which does not address the unique context of NPOs.

This dissertation aims to address the gap in the current academic literature by exploring the unique ways in which NPOs implement succession planning to achieve successful internal executive leadership transformation within the South African non-profit sector. The primary research question is, "How do NPOs plan organisational succession to achieve successful internal executive leadership transformation?"

The study used Eisenhardt's method of building theories from case study research as the overarching research methodology. Data was collected from eight NPOs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the ex-Executive Director (ED) and the incumbent ED of each NPO. Both in-case and cross-case analyses were used to derive the findings.

Key findings from the research include the importance of being intentional about creating diverse and inclusive organisations, having reciprocal trust between the Executive Director and the board, and creating informal learning opportunities for potential successors.

Future research should focus on the first 12 - 24 months of the incumbent ED, exploring the main challenges faced by the new leader as a black person.

Key Words

Diversity, Inclusion, Leadership, Non-profit organisation, NPO, Racial transformation, Succession planning

Table of Contents

List of tables and diagrams

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Area and Purpose

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) play a vital role in South African society, providing critical services for many underserved and marginalised communities. The researcher has been working with NPOs in a human resources advisory capacity since September 2016. During her involvement with the different organisations, all had white executive leaders. Despite funders' and government's expressed preference for and NPO boards' recognition of the need for black executive leaders during leadership transition, these organisations did not take proactive steps to plan for the Executive Director succession and transformation. This frequently created a lengthy gap in leadership due to an (often expensive) external recruitment process. Moreover, this lack of an internal successor typically resulted in the appointment of a new leader who lacked the organisational knowledge, which in turn caused uncertainty within the organisation and a period of instability. In the context of South African NPOs, this tumultuous period could lead to compromised essential services such as food, health or education programmes, which can have a disastrous impact on the lives of many South Africans.

Despite evidence of the important transformative role of NPOs in the South African economy and society, very little research exists on succession planning for executive leadership transformation within this sector.

1.2 Research Question and Scope

This dissertation aims to address this gap in the current academic literature by exploring the unique ways in which NPOs implement succession planning to achieve successful internal executive leadership transformation within the South African non-profit sector. The primary research question is, "How do NPOs plan organisational succession to achieve successful internal executive leadership transformation?"

The literature review explores five main themes relevant to South African NPO succession planning for leadership transformation. First is the role and nature of non-profits (NPOs) in South Africa. The second theme is the meaning of succession planning. Why it is vital for the sustainability of NPOs and how to implement it. The third theme is the definition of transformation in South Africa. This theme looks at the impact of relevant legislation, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003, and whether it increased career development opportunities for potential black leaders. The researcher also explores the importance of increased diversity and organisational inclusion for leadership transformation. Finally, the review delves into the existing literature on succession planning for effective leadership transformation and identifies the factors that may enable executive leadership diversity. While there is some

reference to the significance of senior leadership succession planning in the non-profit sector, literature on this topic is primarily based on case studies from other countries. Moreover, relevant studies in South Africa were conducted in the public or private sector, with limited recognition of the unique context of NPOs.

1.3 Research Methodology

The study used an inductive, qualitative research approach. After exploring several research methodologies, grounded theory was found to be the most suitable overarching methodology. Eisenhardt's method of building theories from case study research was selected as it is ideal for research areas with little or no empirical evidence (Eisenhardt, 2021). Data was purposively collected from eight participating NPOs. To ensure confidentiality, the analysis used the names of planets to represent each NPO. The NPOs represented various sectors, such as education, youth development and feminist organisations. Their budgets ranged from as small as R5 million up to R80 million. Staff size varied between 13 to 60 employees during the leadership transition, excluding volunteers.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the ex-Executive Director (ED) and the incumbent ED of each NPO. Both in-case and cross-case analyses were performed by presenting the detailed stories of each case study, from which the findings were derived. Several tables were designed where similarities and differences were compared. The key themes explored during the analysis included the impact of organisational policies and human resource management capacity, the role of the executive director and the board, the relationship between the incumbent and ex-ED, the importance of formal and informal learning and development and the motivating factors for the incumbent executive director to step up into the leadership role. As Eisenhardt suggests, the analysis findings were compared with the existing literature for corroboration and contrasts.

1.4 Research Findings

The findings of this study shed light on the impact of legislative frameworks, specifically the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003, on racial transformation within the South African non-profit sector. Despite the existence of these regulations, this study suggests that their influence on the need for increased racial diversity in Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) is limited.

Interestingly, many of the NPOs in the study were not obligated to adhere to EEA or B-BBEE regulations due to their budget constraints or staff size. However, many leaders were deliberate in fostering diversity and inclusivity within their organisations, surpassing the requirements of legislation. This proactive approach contrasts with other

sectors where diversity is often viewed as a human resources responsibility. Notably, most NPOs in the study lacked human resources functions, and diversity and inclusion practices were primarily driven by the leaders themselves. The leaders' commitment to racial diversity and inclusivity was evident across the case study NPOs. The motivations of the leaders ranged from ethical considerations to aligning with the communities they serve. The study found that personal conviction, rather than external pressures from funders or community stakeholders, played a significant role in driving leadership transformation. Some leaders even made the decision to step down to facilitate transformation, actively supporting leadership change.

Contrary to the literature that suggests external pressure as a motivator for diversity, the study found that funders did not exert such influence on the participating NPOs. The importance of an inclusive organisational culture in the support of leadership transformation is highlighted. This emphasises the need for intentional efforts by leadership to support the development of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The study challenges the idea that diversity and inclusion policies, without corresponding actions, have any significant impact. Despite only one NPO's confirmation of the existence of an employment equity policy, all organisations achieved leadership transformation. This indicates that the creation of an inclusive organisational culture was more central to success than an employment equity policy.

Within NPOs, the creation of previously absent leadership teams and one-to-one mentorship sessions between the Executive Director and the members of their leadership team were identified as crucial elements of succession planning. These practices empowered potential successors because they allowed them to contribute to strategic decisions, which consequently fostered their growth into leadership roles.

Opportunities for potential successors to externally represent their NPO allowed them to build external relationships and make important decisions. This was found to be critical in the of empowerment and development of individuals. The practice of regular attendance of and exposure to board meetings prior to their appointment as the Executive Director also provided invaluable experience for future leaders.

Noteworthy examples of organisational transparency and inclusivity were observed, particularly at NPOs like Venus, where a quarterly reflective process allowed all staff to contribute their views on strategy and programs. This inclusive approach led to staff empowerment, retention, and internal promotions, which can serve as a model for other NPOs to follow.

Despite the absence of formal employment equity policies, limited or no budget for succession planning and lack of human resource management capacity, common factors were identified, which enabled transformative succession planning. These included
transparent and trusting board-ED relationships and the need to allocate sufficient time to plan for succession.

The absence of formal succession planning policies in all participant NPOs contradicts the literature emphasising the critical importance of operational policies for successful succession planning. Whilst there is an acknowledgement of the success of internal succession for leadership transformation without policies, the study highlights the potential benefits of relevant policies related to promotion and learning. Such policies could demonstrate an organisation's commitment to succession planning, guide staff and board members, and minimise personal agendas in executive recruitment.

The study suggests that the risks associated with leadership transformation are minimised when a strong relationship of trust and transparency exists between the board and the executive. This relationship of trust also influenced the board's views and decisions on proposed plans and transition processes.

Allowing sufficient time for succession planning was found to be intentional, and the discussions regarding succession often happened years in advance. The study challenges previous research that suggests that organisations typically think about succession planning only when an ED expresses the intention to leave. Some of the case study NPOs demonstrated years-long planning, capacity building of internal candidates, and intentional investment in leadership potential.

The impact of the ED appointment and recruitment processes is explored, as this is often overlooked in the literature on leadership succession planning and transformation. The researcher reviewed competitive external recruitment versus internal appointments. This study found three critical considerations to support a transparent and fair recruitment process and contribute to the internal credibility and confidence of the successor once appointed. The first is a strong relationship between the board and potential successors. The second is competitive recruitment processes; the third is external and objective professional recruitment support.

Various enablers which facilitate succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs are explored. This includes the commitment to leadership transformation of the ED and the Board, the relationship between the ED and successor, mentoring, informal learning and development initiatives, and the support network available to potential leaders.

The findings challenge the perception that there is a general lack of leadership commitment to advancing black people in South African organisations. The NPOs in this study displayed a commitment to developing diverse leadership talent, mainly through the active involvement of the Executive Director. Moreover, the ex-EDs played a critical role in proactively fostering diversity through recruitment, the creation of development opportunities, mentorship of potential successors, and leading the succession planning process. Notably, ex-EDs did not leave their roles involuntarily but resigned due to personal convictions or significant life changes.

Contradicting existing literature, the research found that the level of the board's commitment to leadership transformation and racial diversity did not significantly impact the outcome. Leadership transformation was achieved even when the appointment of a black person was not the board's top priority. Furthermore, the racial diversity of the board did not influence the transformation. This highlights the ED's pivotal role in the drive for succession planning in order to bring about leadership transformation. This drive by an ED surpassed the influence of the board in the studied NPOs.

The study emphasises the critical role of the relationship between the former and incumbent ED in enabling succession planning. Trust is crucial for creating an inclusive organisation committed to diversity. A relationship of reciprocal trust between the ex-ED and potential successor fosters growth and development and allows for robust discussions, the resolution of differences, and the confidence to raise contradictory opinions without fear of negative consequences.

Moreover, a trusting relationship between the ex-ED and incumbent ED supported the development of the incumbent ED, such as externally representing the organisation. The study highlights instances where successors were encouraged to attend strategically important meetings. This allowed them to gain valuable experience. Additionally, former EDs championed their successors and showcased a strong belief in their abilities and potential. This support played a pivotal role when boards had to be convinced to appoint successors. Ultimately, it contributed to the successful leadership transformation of the NPOs in this study.

Mentoring emerged as a critical factor that supports succession management for organisational transformation. The study challenges existing literature as it found that the need for a mentor of the same race as the mentee was not a universal consideration. Instead, the skills and experience of the mentor were prioritised. External mentors, while valuable, were not universal, with line managers (ex-EDs) serving as significant mentors. The impact of the mentoring relationship between the ED and potential successor was deemed more important than recognised in the existing literature.

All incumbent EDs received coaching upon assuming the ED role, but very few received coaching during the period leading up to their appointment as the Executive Director. Affordability was identified as a potential barrier to coaching effectiveness as it is an expensive endeavour that only some NPOs can afford.

Despite potential budget constraints, leadership development was successfully applied to achieve transformation goals in the studied NPOs. This study highlights the significance of informal learning opportunities, events, and exposures over formal leadership development programs. The provision of development opportunities, coupled with support and power-sharing, proved essential for effective leadership development.

The study distinguishes between a support network and a network of influence. The former was identified as a critical factor in the career advancement of black leaders. A support network moreover proved to be crucial when the potential successors considered whether to apply for and accept the ED roles.

Finally, although this research explored the organisational factors that influence succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs, the researcher acknowledges the critical role of life experiences as both motivators and enablers of aspirant leaders in NPOs. The study recognises the profound impact of upbringing on the career paths of aspiring black leaders. Many incumbent EDs in the study were brought up in Apartheid South Africa and faced limited access to quality education. Some, even those born post-1994, encountered poverty challenges, as they grew up in townships. The incumbent EDs typically had to overcome adverse experiences and systemic challenges not experienced by their white counterparts. Whilst personal career development was a motivating factor for the incumbent EDs, the primary impetus for assuming the ED role was a deep belief in the mission of their respective NPOs and a passionate commitment to these missions. They were nurtured by supportive NPO leaders who facilitated growth, shared power, and provided development opportunities. These formative experiences were instrumental in their professional development, empowering them to thrive as leaders and ultimately assume the executive directorship of organisations to which they held a deep commitment.

Based on this study, future research should focus on exploring the main challenges faced by the new leader as a person of colour within the first 12 - 24 months of their tenure in office.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The literature review explores five main themes relevant to succession planning for leadership transformation at NPOs in South Africa. First is the role and nature of non-profits (NPOs) in South Africa. The second theme is the meaning of succession planning, why it is important for the sustainability of NPOs and how to implement it. The third theme is the definition of transformation in South Africa, whether relevant legislation has made a difference and the importance of organisational inclusion for transformation. Lastly the review delves into the literature on succession planning for leadership transformation and the factors which may enable executive leadership diversity.

2.2 Non-profits in South Africa

NPOs are defined as those entities that are organised for public purposes, self-governed, and do not distribute surplus revenues as profits. Non-profit organisations are independent of government and business, although they may be closely associated with either or both (Boris & Steuerle, 2006; Western Cape Government, 2009).

This sector is indispensable for the social, economic, and political spheres of South Africa and impacts the lives of individuals in many ways (Boris & Steuerle, 2006). Heinrich (2001) concurs that NPOs are fundamental for the functioning of democracy, alleviating conflicts in society and representing the interests of the poor. The types of organisations are tremendously varied and include religious groups, schools, homeless shelters, civil rights groups, and climate activists, to name a few (Boris & Steuerle, 2006). The diverse functions that these organisations perform in society serve to both support government service delivery and hold it accountable, ultimately enhancing democracy (Habib, 2005).

NPOs in South Africa developed as grassroots community development and social services organisations in the 1970s as an alternative to the apartheid welfare system which did not provide sufficient support to black communities. These services were mostly funded by international donors and delivered by volunteers (Patel, 2012). The sector grew significantly in the 1980s when the slow freeing up of the apartheid regime overlapped with international development initiatives giving NPOs a more prominent role (Heinrich, 2001).

The enactment of the Nonprofit Organisations Act of 1997 introduced an administrative and regulatory framework and led to the formalization of the sector (Nonprofit Organisations Act 71, 1997). This was a traumatic adjustment for the sector but assisted the organisations to respond more effectively to government tenders and applications for international aid (Heinrich, 2001).

In 1998 there were approximately 98 920 registered NPOs in South Africa. Over half of these provided essential services within poor and marginalized communities (Swilling & Russell, 2002). They employed close to 650 000 full-time employees and engaged 1.5 million volunteers (Patel, 2012). According to a report by Stats SA, the number of NPOs grew to 127 032 in 2014. Two-thirds of these were involved either in social services, development, or housing (Lehohla, 2015). As of the 3rd of October 2019, the NPO Register at the Department of Social Development listed 220 116 registered NPOs (Gastrow, 2019). It is estimated that these NPOs provide more than a million jobs (Dlamini, 2019).

The continuous increase in the number of registered NPOs in South Africa is evidence that this sector is not only made up of the informal movements they are often imagined to be, but need a sufficient base of networks, income and human resources to have the desired impact (Ballard et al., 2005). Moreover, there has been a growing expectation from government and funders that NPOs should have the internal capacity to meet human resources, governance and systems requirements whilst managing in a democratic way (Claeye & Jackson, 2012). This notion was highlighted by the recommendations of the King Report on Governance for South Africa (King III) that civil society organisations should apply corporate governance principles (Wyngaard & Hendricks, 2010). The King IV report on corporate governance was published in 2016 and included a supplement for NPOs. Especially relevant to this research is the emphasis on "Leadership continuity through succession planning" as a sign of good governance (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2016).

2.3 Succession Planning

2.3.1 Definition and Scope

The purpose of succession planning is to ensure the continuous performance of an organisation through the timely development, replacement, and strategic application of key people and positions. It emphasises the importance of developing internal capacity to meet current and future talent needs required to support organisational strategy (Rothwell, 2010).

Succession planning and management play a pivotal role in ensuring organisations' continuity and long-term success by identifying and developing key talent to fill critical roles (Estedadi et al., 2015). Rothwell (2010) defines succession planning as a deliberate and systematic process of identifying, developing, and retaining individuals with the potential to fill key leadership positions within an organisation. Rothwell emphasizes the strategic nature of succession planning, positioning it as a proactive approach to organisational development rather than a reactive response to unexpected departures.

According to Rothwell (2010), a successful succession planning program comprises several critical elements that contribute to its effectiveness. One key element is aligning succession planning with the organisation's overall strategic goals. Succession planning should not be viewed as an isolated HR function but rather as an integral part of the strategic planning process. This alignment ensures that the identified successors possess the skills, competencies, and leadership qualities required to drive the organisation forward in accordance with its vision and mission (Rothwell, 2010).

Another critical element emphasized by Rothwell (2010) and Estedadi et al. (2015) is the involvement of top leadership in the succession planning process. Executive commitment is essential to the success of any succession planning program, as it sets the tone for the organisation and communicates the importance of talent development at the highest levels. Leaders must actively champion the initiative, provide resources, and participate in the identification and development of potential successors.

Furthermore, Rothwell (2010) emphasises the significance of a comprehensive talent assessment system within the succession planning framework. This involves identifying and evaluating individuals based on their performance, potential, and readiness for advancement. Assessments should go beyond mere technical skills and thoroughly examine leadership capabilities, emotional intelligence, and adaptability to change (Fulmer & Conger, 2004).

Additionally, a robust development component is crucial for the success of succession planning. Organisations need to invest in the continuous learning and growth of identified successors. Developmental initiatives may include targeted training programs, mentoring, coaching, and stretch assignments to broaden the experiences of potential leaders (Rothwell, 2010).

Finally, Rothwell (2010) highlights the importance of regularly reviewing and updating the succession plan. Organisations need to be able to adapt their strategies, and succession plans should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in leadership needs and priorities.

In conclusion, as defined by Rothwell (2010), succession planning is a strategic process that goes beyond traditional HR practices. Its success hinges on aligning with the organisation's strategic goals, securing executive commitment, implementing a robust talent assessment system, investing in developmental initiatives, and maintaining flexibility through regular reviews. By incorporating these critical elements, organisations can build

a pipeline of capable leaders, ensuring a seamless transition of leadership and sustained success in the long run (Rothwell, 2010).

2.3.2 Succession planning and the non-profit sector

Succession planning is a crucial consideration for ensuring the sustainability of an NPO (Nonprofit Sustainability | National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). Not only does it assist with organisational planning for future executive positions, but it also supports the development of employees (Florea et al., 2013). Succession planning should provide continuity for both planned and emergency staff transitions and requires the organisation to include the transfer of "mission-critical operational knowledge and relationships the incumbents hold" (Donohoe & Carlson, 2010).

Research on executive succession in NPOs has grown primarily in the United States of America (USA) due to concerns over sustainability, as many executives were coming to the end of their tenure (Adams, 2005). Studies have shown that succession planning in NPOs is neither addressed consistently nor uniformly applied (J. Santora et al., 2007). Furthermore, Kempster's (2019) study on non-profit founder transitions in South Africa reveals that NPOs tend to initiate succession planning exclusively during the transition process when the executive director is about to depart.

Executive leadership transition is recognized to be complex, potentially causing great risk and stress, yet most NPOs do not have formal plans to prepare for such a change (Adams, 2005; Gothard & Austin, 2013; J. C. Santora & Sarros, 2001; Wolfred, 2008). Moreover, leadership transition planning should commence well before its occurrence, according to Tuomala et al. (2018).. It seems as if there is indeed "a dichotomy between expressed importance of succession planning coincident with widespread minimal efforts" (Mckee & Froelich, 2016). This is supported by the fact that in the USA non-profit sector only 30 percent of critical leadership roles were filled by internal candidates, which is significantly less than in the private sector (Tuomala et al., 2018). This is despite evidence by Santora (2007) that internal candidates at the management level are the better choice as a successor as they have the best understanding of an NPO's mission and are familiar with organisational challenges.

According to the research, more than 90% of NPOs initiate executive succession planning to ensure that organisational activities can be sustained, followed by 55% being concerned about financial sustainability (Mckee & Froelich, 2016). Studies have shown that internal appointments to leadership roles positively impact organisational performance; therefore, it demonstrates that succession planning contributes to the sustainability of an NPO (Bozer et al., 2015). Tuomala et al. (2018) furthermore reiterate that research confirms that internal successors are more likely to succeed within the first three years, therefore contributing to organisational sustainability.

However, according to Mckee & Froelich (2016) there are many barriers to nonprofit executive succession planning. Nonprofits typically have inadequate finances to support leadership development, lack human resources capacity to champion leadership development initiatives, flat hierarchies which do not provide opportunities for upward mobility, executive leaders who fear they may be made redundant if they share some of their responsibilities, boards who do not take the time to consider leadership transition and there is the threat that donors may withdraw their funding at the suggestion that the leader may consider departing one day (Bozer et al., 2015; Froelich et al., 2011; J. C. Santora & Sarros, 2001; Wolfred, 2008)

These factors may explain why only 30 – 40 percent of senior management appointments at nonprofits in the United States are with internal candidates compared with 60 – 65 percent in for-profits (Mckee & Froelich, 2016). The lack of succession planning may lead to destabilisation, increased staff turnover or even the closure of an organisation during the executive transition (Bozer et al., 2015; Wolfred, 2008).

On the other hand, organisations which prioritise succession planning are more adaptable, show a stronger relationship between the board and executive leader, are clear on their vision and strategic direction, can better manage the risk of leadership change and can maintain their funding and sustain programmatic and operational delivery during a leadership transition. (Donohoe & Carlson, 2010). Research at American universities also suggests that employee engagement and retention improve by 65% when succession planning is used for human resource management and institutional change (Sims, 2014). Furthermore, by strengthening the leadership skills of upcoming managers, the executive can more easily share the challenges of leading an NPO (Bell et al., 2006).

2.4 Transformation

The term ‘transformation’ has many different meanings and connotations (Moraka, 2016). For the purposes of this research, transformation is defined broadly, in the South African context, as the moral obligation to remove the legacies of apartheid (Esterhuyse, 2003), including “the reservation of management for whites” (Burger et al., 2016). According to Moraka (2016) if implemented correctly, transformation can address South Africa’s biggest challenges: inequality, poverty, and unemployment among black people, women, youth, and people with disabilities. Moreover, transformation strategies are designed to benefit historically disadvantaged South Africans (Moraka, 2016). At an organisational level, transformation refers to the changes in thinking and action required to realise diverse, equitable organisations which create opportunities for those disadvantaged by the legacy of apartheid (Schoeman, 2010). For non-profit leaders, transformation means organisations led by individuals who represent the communities they serve or the need for increased leadership diversity (Kempster, 2019).

Given the communities which NPOs serve, these potential leaders are most likely what Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) call “atypical”. They might come from an unprivileged, under-represented background or were raised in poverty. Myeza and April (2021) furthermore explain that in South Africa, black professionals and the ensuing leaders who emerge are atypical, as despite the fact that black individuals are not a minority, they still encounter underrepresentation and are frequently subjected to stereotypes that question their suitability for leadership roles. Many of these leaders have risen from underprivileged backgrounds and faced challenging socio-economic conditions.

Non-profit and voluntary sector organisations are being pressured by various external andinternal stakeholder groups to increase diversity. Internally, this push is often the result of strategic goals (Brown, 2002; Cornforth, 2003) and externally it is often driven by government priorities and regulations, volunteer and service communities such as clients, members, or customers, inter-organisational pressures, and funders (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013). Increasing leadership diversity is necessary to reflect better the communities being served and address gaps in expertise (Fredette et al.,2016;), generate innovative approaches and programming (Jaskyte, 2012), or demonstrate the organisation’s broader relevance and legitimacy (Siciliano, 1996). We take as a guiding principle that greater demographic diversity among members of leadership and governance groups improves governance practice, which together, enhance organisational performance outcomes. (Bernstein & Fredette, 2019).

However, despite the desire to enable transformation in an organisation, it can be challenging and demanding for the white leaders of an organisation (Kempster, 2019).

2.4.1 Legislation

The two major pieces of legislation introduced to address transformation in South African organisations, are the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003 (Arya & Bassi, 2011).

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA) provides strategies and objectives to address equity barriers in organisations, with the aim of creating a fair and just environment for all individuals. The act also aims to ensure that companies gain a competitive advantage and achieve sustainable growth (Roman & Mason, 2019). Roman and Mason (2019) found that although most people and institutions support the EEA, the challenge is in the implementation.

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003 was developed to increase black ownership and control of the economy to address economic inequality after apartheid (Webster & Francis, 2019).

However, due to their budget and staff size, most NPOs are exempt from the requirements of the EEA and B-BBEE (Ryder, 2020). If an organisation has less than 50 employees (EEA, 1998) or has a certain revenue threshold, between R6 million and R75 million, depending on the sector classification, it does not have to report on its equity status (EEA, 1998). In 2020 less than a third of the NPOs had budgets over R75 million and only 32% had more than 50 permanent and/or fixed term employees (Ryder, 2020). Even if all NPOs had to meet the requirements of the EEA and B-BBEE Act, regulatory changes do "not on their own guarantee diversity-driven transformation" (Samdanis & Özbilgin, 2020).

2.4.2 Diversity Management

Workforce diversity refers to the similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, according to Saxena (2014). People differ not only in gender, culture, race, social and psychological characteristics but also in their perspectives and prejudices (Saxena, 2014).
However, given that transformation in the South African context is described as the moral obligation to remove the legacies of apartheid (Esterhuyse, 2003), including "the reservation of management for whites", the focus of this study is on racial diversity and the rise of atypical leaders (Myeza & April, 2021).

In South Africa, despite organisations being under scrutiny for their diversity initiatives and displaying significant commitment to these efforts, the emergence of atypical leaders poses a considerable challenge within these entities (Myeza & April, 2021). To achieve transformation, organisations must strive to overcome the failures of employment equity legislation and practices to increase workforce diversity (Burger et al., 2016). These challenges include lack of communication and shared understanding of employment equity, the white male-dominated organisational culture, low leadership commitment (Booysen, 2007), the lack of diverse role models, exclusion from informal networks, stereotyping (Kilian et al., 2005) and the absence of structured diversity management (Oosthuizen et al., 2019).

Nearly 88% of South African organisations do not have any kind of diversity management programme in place (Roman & Mason, 2019). Although some sectors, such as higher education, have diversity management programmes, it is often lead by weak managers and inadequately coordinated (Ngcamu & Teferra, 2018). Ngcamu and Teferra (2018) further state that for a diversity programme to be successful, the whole organisation should be taught how to promote and celebrate diversity.

Although the diversity management strategy of one organisation will differ from the next based on its needs, it must strive address the following (Kilian et al., 2005):

1.	Changes in the employee demographics
2.	The importance of visible role models
3.	Indicators of a transparent, inclusive work environment
4.	Employee's view of the organisational culture
5.	Employee's perception regarding diverse managerial competency

The resulting benefits from a diverse workforce throughout the organisation include increased creativity, productivity, and resilience (Kilian et al., 2005). Furthermore, the increased representation of atypical leaders can offer emotional and structural support, foster loyalty, provide empathetic leadership and guidance, and instil a sense of belonging among black employees within an organisation, thereby enhancing the overall workplace experience for black professionals (Myeza & April, 2021)

2.4.3 Inclusion

According to Burnett as cited in April (2012) and Fredette et al. (2016) to achieve transformation, the focus should not exclusively be on diversity but rather on inclusion. In fact, research suggests that inclusion is the most important part of a diversity management programme as it enables all people, irrespective of their diversity, to prosper and progress in an organisation (April, 2012; Brimhall, 2019). According to April (2006) "inclusion is about creating empowering environments of difference where people can be themselves, comfortably contributing their full selves and all the ways in which they differ from others, and respecting others without making it difficult for others to be their full selves." An inclusive organisational culture is one in which every individual is valued as an essential part of the organisation's success (Bourne, 2009).

Creating an inclusive organisation requires leadership commitment (Berthoud & Greene, 2001; A. Thomas, 2002), the intentional effort to support people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013) and embedding inclusion efforts into work plans, policies and procedures (Brimhall, 2019). Bradshaw and Fredette (2013) differentiate between functional and social inclusion, both of which are important to create an inclusive workplace. Functional inclusion describes an intentional effort to support people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013). Social inclusion covers mentorship, induction practices, retreats and other social events which help to build relationships and grow understanding

between individuals in the workplace (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013). Brimhall (2019) furthermore highlights the importance of formally embedding inclusion in workplans, policies and practices to promote the integration of differences.

According to April (2012), effective communication and openness to create mutual respect, develop trust, and address marginalization are crucial elements in creating an inclusive organisation. Creating an inclusive work culture is challenging and takes ongoing individual courage, energy, drive and resilience (April, 2012).

However, creating an inclusive organisation not only supports transformation but can bring many other advantages such as increased innovation, growth, improved stakeholder engagement, adaptability, and fundraising (Abzug & Galaskiewicz, 2001; Bernstein & Fredette, 2019; Joecks et al., 2013). Inclusion can also lead to cohesive and shared values, vision and purpose among a diverse workforce (Shelton et al., 2002). Furthermore, NPOs typically have improved governance and organisational performance with increased diversity among senior leadership which is more representative of the communities they work with (Bernstein & Fredette, 2019).

Moreover, not striving for inclusion and, therefore, transformation in an organisation could lead to high turnover of black employees, the loss of investment in employee development, costly staff replacement, poor corporate brand image, unrealised growth opportunities and an unhealthy organisational culture (Hubbard, 2012; Ngobeni, 2006; Thomas & Robin, 1996).

2.5 Enablers for succession planning for leadership transformation

According to Greer and Virick (2008) and inclusive organisational culture is a critical to implement succession management for leadership transformation. Furthermore, data suggests that succession planning with diversity and inclusion embedded in the programme increases the number of leaders from diverse backgrounds (Kezar & Eckel, 2007; Wilson & Meyer, 2013). In fact, research implies that planned succession management committed to diversity is fundamental for leadership transformation (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2020). Succession planning and management can also be used as strategic processes to identify, develop and promote qualified individuals from previously disadvantaged groups into senior leadership roles (González, 2010; Greer & Virick, 2008). Furthermore, succession planning for diverse leadership, holds great benefits for organisations such as increased innovation, market growth and an improvement in strategy and operations (Greer & Virick, 2008).

As noted above, succession planning with an integrated focus on diversity is critical for leadership transformation. NPOs may have to overcome many obstacles such as funding to support leadership development, human resources

capacity to drive succession planning and the lack of promotional opportunities (J. Santora et al., 2007). There are also several potential enablers, which are explored in the next section.

2.5.1 Organisational Policies

The British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) states that "HR policies are written guidance on how a wide range of issues should be handled within an organisation. They include a description of principles, rights and responsibilities for managers and employees. Policies play a key role in supporting fairness and consistency across an organisation." (CIPD, 2023). According to Beltran-Martin and Bou-Llusar (2018), policies that provide clear guidance on recruitment, selection, training and development support the capacity building of employees and their active participation in an organisation.

Well-developed HR policies and procedures should reflect an organisation's strategy and culture and support the building of motivated staff and the creation of trusting relationships between employers and employees, benefiting everyone (CIPD, 2023).

The development of operational policies is crucial for the successful implementation of succession planning (Rothwell, 2001; Estedadi et al., 2015). Furthermore, the implementation of a well-developed diversity and inclusion policy is essential for any reputable organisation (Forbes. 2022). Although essential, equality, diversity and inclusion should not only be reflected in stand-alone policies but also incorporated into other policies such as recruitment and selection (CIPD. 2023).

Conversely, Myeza and April (2021) found that organisations that are untransformed and lack diversity tend to practice discriminatory and exclusionary policies which do not consider the inclusion of marginalised groups and, therefore, could protect the privilege of the status quo.

It is clear that effective communication and implementation determine the successful impact of organisational policies (CIPD, 2023). Moreover, in many non-profit organisations, participants were unable to recall the organisation's leadership succession planning strategies or practices. It seems most organisations lack written succession plans, including emergency succession plans (Kempster, 2019). This is however not unique to NPOs as Makapela and Mtshelwane (2021) also found poor communication a major stumbling block for the consistent implementation of performance management and learning and development policies in South African municipalities.

2.5.2 The role of executive leadership

Strong executive management and board commitment are required to successfully implement diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as succession planning for diversity (Berthoud & Greene, 2001; Greer & Virick, 2008; A. Thomas, 2002). Research shows that those organisations that have successfully developed diverse leadership talent had an executive directly involved with the process (Friedman, 2017). Kilian (2005) moreover highlights the importance of senior executives driving the change towards more diverse leadership, as failure to do so will result in the status quo being maintained.

Succession planning requires an altruistic willingness from the leader to consider a process which ultimately will primarily benefit the successor (Florea et al., 2013). The executive director must take the lead and use his/her influence to ensure the sustainability of the organisation, of which succession planning is a critical element (Florea et al., 2013). Ahmad (2018) corroborates that successful succession planning requires a succession program as well as commitment from the leaders. She furthermore comments that the leadership style also significantly influences the implementation of succession as it impacts the career and personal development of future leaders in an organisation. It is critical that a leader empowers their subordinates and has the characteristics to support the career growth of their employees (Ahmad, 2018).

The boards of NPOs entrust the executive to guide them on the identification and development of high-potential individuals who could become future leaders (Bell et al., 2006). However, according to Froelich et al (2011) and Bell et al (2006) only 29% of NPO executives discuss a possible succession plan with their boards.

With regard to diversity management, leadership commitment is one of the biggest challenges (Thomas, 2002) in South Africa. In some sectors, there is an absence of leadership commitment to the advancement of black people in South African organisations (Gather & Erickson, 1993). There is a perception that leaders view efforts to increase diversity and employment equity as the responsibility of Human Resources and that it is purely done to fill quotas (Oosthuizen et al., 2019). This might be due to the practices and structures of apartheid which were entrenched at an organisational level in South Africa (Howard & Coombe, 2006; Street & Gallupe, 2009). Since the end of apartheid, South African executives had to lead the process of changing their organisations (S. M. Nkomo & Kriek, 2011) whilst also adapting their own social identities (Maré, 2005). A leader's mindset and openness to organisational change have proved to be critical to achieving change in organisations (S. M. Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). Employees expect leaders to actively create equity in the workplace through their own behaviour (April, 2012; James, 2008). The leadership skills and qualities required to create an inclusive organisation with a commitment to diversity include humility, building trust, engaging others in shared meaning, a distinctive and compelling voice, integrity; adaptability, learning from negative situations and suspending judgement (Bennis &

Thomas, 2002; Florea et al., 2013). Such leaders can provide a supportive, positive, empathetic work culture and create hope that it is possible for their organisations to transform, (S. M. Nkomo & Kriek, 2011) and improve the overall success of an organisation (Brimhall, 2019; Oosthuizen et al., 2019).

2.5.3 The role of the Board

Boards should also set strategic organisational priorities and not only rely on the executive to raise it (Bozer et al., 2015). They need to recognise that executive leaders might want to leave in the future and initiate an annual executive succession dialogue (Bell et al., 2006). Boards should insist that policies are in place to prepare and guide the organisation for sudden or planned leadership changes (Bozer et al., 2015). They should interrogate what the requirements of a future executive might be and whether internal candidates are being developed to become future leaders in the organisation (Bell et al., 2006). Given that the board plays a critical role during a leadership transition, it can severely impact an NPO's stability if they were not prepared for succession (Kempster, 2019) and only consider it when a leadership crisis occurs instead of continuous best practice (Bell et al., 2006). Moreover, if a board is predominantly white, leadership transformation might be harder to attain as recruiting and developing future non-white executives will be more challenging (Bell et al., 2006).

2.5.4 Learning and Development

The literature on human resources practice highlights that the ability motivation opportunity (AMO) framework is an important consideration in improving organisational performance. (Hafeez et al, 2022). This is typically divided into the following three areas:

- Ability HR practices which include recruitment and training.
- Motivation-enhancing HR practices, e.g. compensation based on high performance, performance appraisal, etc., and
- Opportunity-enhancing HR practices, e.g., involvement in decision-making and information sharing (Jiang, et al., 2012).

Moreover, Hafeez et.al. (2022) emphasises the critical importance of development and motivation in the non-profit sector.

Furthermore, for South Africa to attain demographically representative senior leadership, it is imperative that organisations provide training, development, mentoring and coaching (Terblanche et al., 2018). Ngcamu and Tefarra (2018) concur that leadership development can successfully be applied to achieve the transformation agenda. Equally, the Bozer et al. study of 54 Israeli NPOs found that leadership development improves succession planning in the sector by retaining key staff (Greer & Virick, 2008) and effectively meeting the future needs of

the organisation (Bryson, 2018; J. C. Santora et al., 2010). Based on research conducted at American NPOs, investing in the development of internal staff with leadership potential is important for the strengthening of the executive team and the support of succession planning. It therefore increases the likelihood that the next executive director will be an internal appointment (Tuomala, 2018).

However, the research into leadership development in the sector is limited (Hailey & James, 2004), especially regarding African nonprofit leadership (Hailey & James, 2004). Additionally, most of the development programmes are based on Western models, which often do not reflect the African context and culture (James, 2008).

According to Santora et al. (2010) many non-profits lack sufficient funds and human resource departments to support and coordinate formalised leadership development initiatives. However, based on the existing research on African nonprofit leaders, they develop because of discussions, events, exposures, and the sharing of experiences and not once-off formal training events (James, 2008). Research conducted at South African NPOs supports the notion that informal learning through participation with colleagues of other NPOs within a community of practice has a greater impact on leadership development than formal learning (Julie, 2010). This aligns with the AMO framework's emphasis on knowledge sharing and employee involvement in decision-making (Hafeez et al., 2022). Guerci et al. (2016) suggest that offering informal developmental opportunities can also enhance employees' comprehension of an organization's policies and ethics. Furthermore, sharing knowledge from top to bottom assists employees to feel informed and part of the organisation (Bhatti et al., 2021; Guerci et al., 2017). This is especially important for non-profit organisations, where employees should trust each other as they work towards a shared mission (Hafeez et al., 2022).

Similarly, participants at a higher education institution indicated that informally organised training to strive for transformation was more effective than any formal programmes offered, as the latter was not responsive to the specific needs of potential leaders (Ngcamu & Teferra, 2018).

Julie (2010) argues that the trend in recent years for NPOs to engage in formal standardised training has negatively impacted the sector's leadership development and sustainability. This may be because the content of most short-term leadership training programmes is not suitable for future NPO leaders (Austin et al., 2011), and NPOs do not typically have a competency-based approach to identify the leadership development required (Santora et al., 2010). However, formal training programmes can be used to complement but not substitute for informal learning (Julie, 2010).

For leadership development to be meaningful for succession planning and leadership transformation, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Develop a learning and development strategy in line with the organisation's policies and plans (Ngcamu & Teferra, 2018).
- Identify the behavioral competencies required for the organisation and describe those required for the executive leadership (Greer & Virick, 2008).
- Endeavour to utilise valid, objective performance indicators (Greer & Virick, 2008).
- Utilise performance evaluations to identify leadership development needs (Donohoe & Carlson, 2010).
- Ensure that the leadership development programme is designed to build and grow the specific skills, knowledge and understanding for a leadership role in an NPO (Austin et al., 2011).
- Learning programme participants should be given opportunities to lead after completion (Kempster, 2019) and their contribution to the organisation should be monitored (Ngcamu & Teferra, 2018).

2.5.5 Mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as 'an intense, dyadic relationship in which a more senior experienced person called a mentor, provides support and assistance to a more junior, less experienced colleague, referred to as a protégé or mentee' (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Various interpretations exist regarding the definition of a mentor, spanning from being a friend, career advisor, and source of information to serving as an intellectual guide, role model, or teacher (Colvin and Ashman, 2010). Reis (2012) classifies the skills addressed by mentoring into four distinct categories: interpersonal and human resource skills, organisational and project management skills, technical competence, and status and prestige skills.

Mentoring has proved to be successfully applied as part of succession management for transformation for organisations (Greer & Virick, 2008). Studies have also shown that mentoring may support the development of skills, confidence and purpose (Oosthuizen et al., 2019; Reynolds, 2011) to redress gender and race discrimination (Katz, 2021) and have a significant positive impact on the career progression of upcoming black leaders (April, 2012; James, 2008; Kilian et al., 2005).

Black leader-mentors can significantly positively impact black employees as they "can provide emotional support, create loyalty and give guidance and a sense of belonging" (Myeza & April, 2021). Thomas (2001) has also found that cross-race mentoring relationships can be more challenging. The parties may be less prepared to discuss difficult, sensitive topics (D. A. Thomas, 2001). However, black employees can still benefit from a cross-racial mentoring relationship if the white mentor is able to let go of negative stereotypes and recognise that race can be a potential obstacle (Thomas, 2001).

The most common types of mentoring are formal and informal (Bhopal, 2020). Formal mentoring entails a structured program provided by an organisation to offer guidance and support to colleagues interested in participating. The specifics of formal mentoring programs may differ across organisations, but their primary emphasis is on fostering the long-term career development of the mentee (Jones, 2012). Formal mentoring programmes could be used to give employees who would not have had access to a mentor otherwise the opportunity to participate in such a relationship and potentially create a culture of mentoring in an organisation (Kilian et al., 2005). According to Bhopal's (2020) research on the influence of formal mentoring programmes on black scholars in UK tertiary education institutions, such schemes can be beneficial. However, these programmes ought to consider the distinct and exclusive experiences of workers who have faced marginalisation and exclusion in their careers (Bhopal, 2020).

Informal mentoring relies on a voluntary connection typically established between individuals who share common interests (Bhopal, 2020). Moreover, mentoring relationships will ideally form naturally, as such relationships typically have a greater level of commitment (Kilian et al., 2005) and the relationship is often built on (Bhopal, 2020). According to Bhopal (2020)
black employees tended to engage in informal mentoring and were more inclined to underscore the significance of their mentee sharing the same ethnic background as them.

The supervisor of a black employee may also play the role of mentor by guiding them on the organisation's culture, supporting their career goals, recognising their achievements, including them in professional groups and promoting any of their ideas which will be advantageous for the organisation (Kilian et al., 2005). Furthermore, providing opportunities for black leaders to mentor young and disenfranchised black employees is essential, as they can better understand and relate to the distinct experiences shared exclusively with black employees (Myeza & April, 2021).

Based on the literature, mentoring plays an essential role in the career progression of black employees. According to Bhopal's (2020) the majority of research participants expressed that they could have progressed much faster in their careers if they had received mentoring support sooner. Moreover, mentoring is not only a valuable tool for the individuals who participate but can be advantageous for their employers, as they are more likely to retain talented individuals who are true to themselves and actively engaged in the organisation (Myeza & April, 2021).

2.5.6 Coaching

Coaching can be a powerful tool for those who have previously not participated in a mentoring relationship (Katz, 2021). Rosha and Lace (2016) describe coaching as a "regular, synergic, learning and development-orientated process which aims to improve, facilitate, create and to support." Coaching can also be described as a form of consultation to change behaviour and achieve personal growth and results (Rosha & Lee, 2016; Katz, 2021). Executive coaches generally support individuals in establishing priorities, navigating decision-making processes, facilitating challenging conversations, managing issues related to staff performance, and enhancing goal-oriented productivity. They provide guidance across various relationships, such as those with direct reports, peers, senior leaders, the board, external providers, and occasionally other organisations (Katz, 2021).

Although the practice of coaching initially focused on supporting executive managers, it has proved to be an effective way of supporting high-potential individuals (Katz, 2021) or those transitioning into senior management roles (Reynolds, 2011). Coaching appears to hold significant value for recently appointed senior leaders by creating a safe space in which they can have honest and courageous conversations (Austin et al., 2011), which aid them in overcoming feelings of vulnerability and mitigating the risk of failure (Reynolds, 2011).

Although the research on the effectiveness of coaching in NPOs is limited, leaders have given positive feedback on the impact of coaching (Katz, 2021). Moreover, it is significant to note that Katz (2021) found that coaching can support organisational transformation by improving gender and racial equity. Coaching has also proved to support new executive leaders and their predecessors in navigating the operational and emotional challenges of the leadership transition period in NPOs (Tuomala et al., 2018).

2.5.7 Networking

Networking can be defined as "behaviours that are aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages" (Wolff & Moser, 2009, p197). Studies in the United States have found that minorities (disadvantaged majority in South Africa) who advance to executive leadership roles all have a strong social and corporate network (D. A. Thomas, 2001). In NPOs, access and being part of different networks are rated as key success factors for upcoming leaders (Gothard & Austin, 2013). Therefore, succession management programmes should include ways to transfer and expand the networks of potential leaders (Rothwell, 2010).

This is especially significant for NPOs when the founder intends to leave the organisation as their network of peers, supporters, and donors is invaluable. These longstanding relationships cannot be transferred hastily

(Kempster, 2019). Furthermore, when a founder departs, one of the most significant losses is often their network, especially with investors, as Adams (2005) noted.

Given that networks are important for career success (Brass, 1985) and hold individual and group benefits (Adler & Kwon, 2002), it is important to develop a better understanding of the impact of networking on the career progression of the disadvantaged majority in South Africa, the obstacles they face and the potential solutions to these obstacles (Ibarra, 1995).

There are different perspectives in the literature on networks stemming from the sociological and organisational psychology fields (Ibarra, 1995). Sociological literature focuses on the range, diversity, and level of status of an individual's network and how this can be instrumental in their career development (Ibarra, 1995). On the other hand, organisational literature emphasises the importance of trust and loyalty in these network relationships (Kanter, 1977). This implies that not only is the instrumental value of the network important but also its psychosocial function because of the nature of the relationship ((Ibarra, 1995) or the emotional support provided (Dabos & Rousseau, 2013).

A re-occurring concept in the study of networks is homophily (Ibarra, 1995) which is defined as "the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are similar in identified organisational group affiliations" (Marsden, 1988). Homophily in a network eases communication, makes behaviour more predictable and creates interpersonal trust (Ibarra, 1995). Therefore, homophily can be disadvantageous to minorities by limiting their access to a majority group (Karimi et al., 2018), adequate networking opportunities and career success (Ossenkop et al., 2015). This might explain why building effective networks is more challenging for minorities (Kilian et al., 2005) and why some organisations have resorted to providing support with networking (Greer & Virick, 2008). Thomas (2001) concurs and goes on to say that organisations should be trained on the importance and efficacy of networks.

The research on minority networks is contradictory (Nkomo & Cox, 1990). A pluralist perspective suggests that minorities should use different networking approaches from their white colleagues as they face different challenges, but an assimilation paradigm implies racial minorities should develop the same interpersonal networks (Nkomo & Cox, 1990). However, white members have greater access to power and resources through their formal positions and informal network connections (Ibarra, 1995). This implies that minority identities, such as black professionals in the South African workplace (Myeza & April, 2021) might not reap the same benefits if they follow the same approach as most white colleagues (Ibarra, 1995). In fact, following the same approach as the majority may even backfire for minorities (Nkomo & Cox, 1990). Thomas (1993) and Ibarra (1995) suggest a

pluralist approach for minority networking across race and groupings to fulfil different functions. Black managers can provide each other with emotional and behavioural support whilst white colleagues can provide instrumental functional support (Ibarra, 1995; Thomas, 1993). In fact, the most successful networks for career progression of minorities, are those that are heterogeneous along the following three areas: "functional (mentors, sponsors, colleagues); position (senior executives, peers and juniors) and location (department, internal and external); and demography (mixed race, gender, age and culture)" (D. A. Thomas, 2001).

2.5.8 Resources

According to Yawson (2019), non-profits have to plan for succession and the development of leaders with limited funding. Should a leadership transition take place in the middle of the financial year, it could place extra financial strain on the organisation as the cost of transition might not have been budget for (Yawson, 2019).

NPO leaders who have undergone leadership transitions, therefore, recognise the need to budget for required resources during this period and suggest setting aside a transition fund. These costs included expenses such as hiring recruitment specialists, hiring a coach, paying two salaries during an overlap period between the previous director and their successor, or contracting change management consultants (Kempster, 2019; Tuomala, 2018).

2.6 Conclusion

NPOs play an essential role in South African society, providing critical services for many underserved and marginalised communities (Nkonyeni & Radebe, 2020). It is, therefore, critical that this sector is sustainable and transformed to reflect the demographics of the country at all occupational levels (Matotoka & Odeku, 2021). To attain meaningful leadership transformation, succession planning should be a necessary consideration (Tyatya, 2018). Succession planning for leadership diversity does not only improve organisational equity (Kilian et al., 2005) but holds many other advantages (Greer & Virick, 2008). Although each organisation should use the approach or model for succession planning that best suit their circumstances and resources (Donohoe & Carlson, 2010), a few enablers for leadership transformation, which are within reach for most NPOs, do exist.

Overall, the literature addressing transformational succession planning in NPOs, are limited. With respect to NPOs, most studies on either succession planning or diversity management are in the USA, with limited reference to South Africa (Kempster, 2019). Furthermore, the literature on enabling practices to achieve leadership diversity from within an organisation, is limited (Greer & Virick, 2008; Jackson, 2017). Although there is a significant body of work on leadership transformation in South Africa, it is based on the private or public sector, not nonprofit, leaving a gap in the literature for research.

The aim of the literature review was to describe the different layers relevant to succession planning and leadership transformation and, where possible, highlighted the specific considerations for NPOs and/or South Africa. The research that will be conducted as part of this dissertation will aim to add new perspectives to this topic and create the foundation for a program to aid succession planning for leadership transformation at NPOs in South Africa.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology which was used for this study. According to Groenewald (2004), the researcher needs to understand several research methodologies to decide the most appropriate for a specific study. With this in mind, a few methodologies and their suitability for this study are discussed before further exploration of the most appropriate approach. This discussion is followed by an outline of the research design, how the data was collected and analysed, how the research criteria were addressed, and the study's potential limitations and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research method

When embarking on a study, the researcher is required to decide on the most suitable methodology for the problem he or she is exploring (Gounder, 2012). Research methodologies can be qualitative or quantitative or incorporate both in a mixed method (Gounder, 2012). This section discusses qualitative research and the reasons for choosing this methodology, followed by a brief overview of quantitative and mixed-method methodologies.

This study explored organisations' behaviours, policies and processes that enable succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs. A qualitative research methodology was selected as it is best suited to explore complex social occurrences, such as human behaviour within organisations, and make meaning of it (Bailey, 2008; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research allows for the use of various data sources to explore the phenomena in context, such as speaking to individuals, observing relationships or reviewing policies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Such immersion in various data types can facilitate the discovery of the phenomena being studied. (Gehman et al., 2018).

Qualitative research involves collecting non-numerical data such as texts, images and videos. (Apuke, 2017). On the other hand, a quantitative research method gathers and analyses numeric data using statistical techniques. The types of data it collects would be the answers to questions such as who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how (Apuke, 2017).

Mixed methods research incorporates techniques from both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer research questions. Mixed methods facilitate asking confirmatory and exploratory questions within the same study and enable constructing and confirming theory (Byrne & Humble, 2007). Although it is ideal for a researcher to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, time and financial constraints often prohibit this from happening (Gounder, 2012).

Following a comparison of the different approaches, a qualitative research methodology was found to be the most appropriate for this study, especially given that qualitative research outcomes can support organisations' development as it aims to understand how to enable succession planning for leadership transformation (Mohajan, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative research scholars of today are obliged to reveal the injustices in history and society and use the studies for positive transformation (Denzin, 2016, p. 115) and not purely "interpret the world" (Baškarada & Koronios, 2018). This consideration is significant for this study as the ultimate praxis is implementing the research outcomes and contributing to succession planning for leadership transformation at NPOs in South Africa.

Inductive and deductive research are two contrasting approaches to scientific inquiry, each with its distinct characteristics and applications (Azungah, 2018). This study will be using an inductive approach for the data analysis.

Deductive research involves the formulation of a hypothesis and the testing of this hypothesis through empirical observation and data analysis. In deductive reasoning, researchers start with a general theory or hypothesis and then test its applicability to specific instances or situations (Trochim, 2006). The process moves from the general to the specific, and findings are used to confirm or refute the initial hypothesis.

On the other hand, inductive research takes a bottom-up approach, beginning with specific observations and then generating theories or general principles based on these observations. Inductive reasoning involves drawing conclusions from patterns and trends identified in the data, without necessarily starting with a predefined hypothesis (Bryman, 2016).

The key difference lies in the direction of the reasoning process. Deductive research moves from theory to observation, while inductive research moves from observation to theory (Bryman, 2016).

Qualitative research often aligns more closely with inductive reasoning. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, observations, and content analysis, are well-suited for exploring complex phenomena, generating new theories, and gaining an in-depth understanding of social processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.3 Research approach

Gehman et al. (2018) caution that qualitative research embodies a variety of approaches and cannot be defined as a singular approach. Furthermore, Groenewald (2004) recommends that a researcher understands a wide range

of research methodologies before picking the most suitable one for their study. Before deciding on grounded theory, the researcher considered phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory as possible research methodologies. This section examines these three methodologies, all of which have increasingly been used in the past 25 years (Denzin & Lincoln, Yvonna, 2006). This is followed by a discussion on the application of the specific type of grounded theory and why it was considered the most appropriate for this study.

3.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences, feelings, beliefs or convictions of people who are or were involved in the phenomena being researched (Groenewald, 2004). The researcher intends to describe the person's experiences as truthfully as possible without using a pre-determined framework (Groenewald, 2004). This process could uncover new and forgotten meanings to everyday experiences (Laverty, 2003) as it attempts to explore and understand the person's subjective experience and accurately reveal the meanings (Laverty, 2003). Phenomenology requires deep reflection during the research process (Goulding, 2005).

Although individual participants were interviewed for this study, it explored factors and phenomena in the participant organisations rather than purely an individual's lived experiences. Therefore, phenomenology was not suited.

3.3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography describes a research methodology that typically involves observing participants within the field of study, be it a community or organisation, and then describing and interpreting the observation (Harrison, 2018). During the process, the researcher strives for the near-impossible goal of becoming fully integrated with the setting so that the participants' activities carry on as usual (Harrison, 2018). Researchers applying ethnography use a variety of tools during their research. The most critical are participant observation, conducting interviews and writing field notes (Harrison, 2018). The researcher aims to look for the meanings behind participants' behaviour or what they say and endeavours to identify patterns or common threads, whether organisational culture or management style (Goulding, 2005).

Ethnography requires extended periods of direct observation of the group members to attempt balanced, holistic explanations (Goulding, 2005). Ethnography was unsuitable for this study because it explored past events and behaviours that lead to succession planning for leadership transformation rather than observing them in real-time.

3.3.3 Grounded Theory

This study used grounded theory as its research methodology (Walsh et al., 2015). "Grounded theory is defined as the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1973, p.1). It developed as a methodology from sociology, studying society, individuals and their relationships (Goulding,

2005). Glaser and Strauss (1973) believed that there were not sufficient suitable theories for the areas of research in social life that academics were beginning to investigate (Glaser & Strauss, 1973). Grounded theory is ideal for unexplored research areas within the context of social life, investigating individual and relational factors (Crooks, 2001) and answering questions to figure out how things take place (Gehman et al., 2018). For these reasons, grounded theory was the preferred methodology for exploring succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs.

Grounded theory is a rigorous approach exploring a wide range of data, including in-depth interviews, observations and field notes describing conditions, registering events, reflecting emotions and recording ideas (Goulding, 2005). Before developing the final concepts or theory, the researcher should consider various possible interpretations of the data (Goulding, 2005). Once the theory is generated from the data, it should stand the test of time, although it might require modification (Glaser & Strauss, 1973).

According to Glaser and Strauss (1973), the following factors should be considered to apply Grounded Theory:

1. The theory must be highly suitable for the main area in which it will be applied.
2. Actors/people in the area must easily understand it.
3. It should be adequately generalisable within several varied situations within the central area, not only a particular type of situation.
4. The individual applying the theory should be permitted to adopt the structure as daily circumstances change through time.

In conclusion, Walsh (2015) emphasises the importance of understanding grounded theory and cautions that the absence thereof could lead to theoretical misunderstanding and inadequate research design.

3.4 Approaches to grounded theory building

Since grounded theory has become the dominant approach for qualitative research studies, it has been applied with varied approaches and for different purposes (Walsh et al., 2015). This section will explore the approaches of Gioia, Langley and Eisenhardt to grounded theory (Gehman et al., 2018).

3.4.1 Gioia Approach

The Gioia approach to grounded-theory-based research design has evolved over more than 25 years, demonstrating a commitment to refining and enhancing the process of understanding phenomena (Gehman et al., 2018). In the early phases of research design and data collection, Gioia's method aligns with traditional grounded

theory approaches, ensuring a solid foundation for subsequent analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). However, it is during the data analysis and theory formulation phases that the Gioia approach distinguishes itself.

A notable aspect of the Gioia approach is the emphasis placed on treating research participants as "knowledgeable agents" during the data collection phase (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 16). This underscores the importance of respecting participants' perspectives and experiences, with the researcher adopting the role of a neutral reporter, tasked with faithfully presenting participants' views without immediate interpretation or explanation (Gioia et al., 2013). This emphasis on participants as knowledgeable agents enhances the richness and authenticity of the data collected.

The unique feature of Gioia's method becomes more evident during the data analysis and theory formulation phases. Initially, the researcher identifies themes from participants' expressions, a process akin to traditional grounded theory approaches. However, the Gioia approach introduces a 2nd-order analysis where these codes are organised into "theory-centric themes" to construct a data structure (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 16). This data structure primarily focuses on novel and emerging concepts that lack satisfactory theoretical grounding in the existing literature. The relationships between these 2nd-order concepts are then systematically formulated, culminating in the creation of a grounded theory model.

Importantly, the exploration of the literature to refine the newly formulated concepts occurs only after the grounded theory model is established (Gioia et al., 2013). This sequential approach ensures that the emergent theory remains grounded in the data, minimising the risk of undue theoretical influence during the initial phases of analysis. The resultant theory is expected to be transferable and defensible, adhering to the foundational principles of grounded theory methodology (Gioia et al., 2013). This process not only captures the richness of participants' perspectives but also contributes novel insights to the existing body of knowledge. However, challenges may arise in managing the complexity of this approach, particularly in navigating the delicate balance between theoretical exploration and data fidelity. Despite these challenges, the Gioia approach offers a robust framework for generating grounded theories that are deeply rooted in empirical data (Gioia et al., 2013).

3.4.2 Langley – Theory from process

Anne Langley's grounded theory method is a research approach that delves into the intricate dynamics of events and activities, aiming to comprehend the underlying processes driving their evolution (Langley, 1999). In contrast to being confined to a specific procedural framework, Langley emphasises the paramount importance of process data in unravelling the intricacies of how and why phenomena unfold.

The foundation of Langley's method lies in the recognition that process research, while not inherently linked to a singular method, necessitates a wealth of longitudinal data that meticulously captures the unfolding sequence of events (Gehman et al., 2018). This longitudinal aspect is crucial, as it enables a nuanced understanding of events, activities, and decisions in their temporal context, ideally studied in real-time (Langley, 1999). The utilisation of process data involves collecting and analysing stories that unfold over time, providing a comprehensive narrative of the phenomena under investigation.

However, employing Langley's grounded theory method poses challenges. The analysis of sequences of events can occur at multiple levels, making it intricate to determine the appropriate unit of analysis (Langley, 1999). The method encounters ambiguity in delineating the boundaries of these events, further complicating the identification of the unit of analysis. Despite these challenges, Langley's approach sheds light on the significance of capturing a broad spectrum of data, ranging from changing relationships to thoughts, feelings, and interpretations (Langley, 1999). This breadth ensures a holistic exploration of the processes at play, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny.

3.4.3 The Eisenhardt Method

This study utilised Eisenhardt's (1989) method of building theories from case study research. This method can be applied to achieve different outcomes, including providing a description or testing theory (Harris & Sutton, 1986). However, its primary aim is to build theory (Eisenhardt, 2021). The common thread is that it addresses questions that lack clear answers due to little or conflicting prior theory and/or empirical evidence (Eisenhardt, 2021).

Eisenhardt (2021) defines theory as “a set of constructs linked together in relationships that are supported by theoretical arguments (i.e. mechanisms) that seek to explain a focal phenomenon” (Eisenhardt, 2021).

Following a review of the relevant literature, no theory for succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs was identified (Gehman et al., 2018). Therefore, the Eisenhardt method is appropriate for grounding a theory on this topic (Eisenhardt, 1989). This method creates an opportunity to test the literature on the topic in different fields, for example, transformation and succession planning practices in the non-profit, private and government sectors (Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021). Furthermore, it is suitable as a case study research strategy that is focused on comprehending the dynamics within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989) and can involve single or multiple cases (Yin, 1984). Eisenhardt (2021) recommends studying multiple cases when building a theory. This study was based on a single setting, the South African NPO sector, but several cases (NPOs) were studied as multiple cases may provide more robust evidence of the research than a single case (Rowley, 2002). The theory produced from multiple cases is more prone to be correct, exact and generalisable (Gehman et al.,

2018). Consistent with Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion that case studies combine various data sources, data was collected from both interviews and field notes. Although the researcher interviewed the participants on organisational policies, these were not reviewed.

3.5 Research sampling

A combination of convenience and purposive sampling was used to select the case studies (Palys, 2008). The researcher works in the NPO sector and, therefore knew one or two appropriate organisations which met the criteria for this study (Groenewald, 2004; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). These were NPOs where an internal candidate of colour (black as defined by the B-BBEE) was appointed to be the successor on the departure of the white executive leader (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The researcher asked the leaders of these organisations and other contacts within her network to introduce her to other EDs or ex-EDs who work(ed) at similar NPOs.

3.6 Data collection

Interviews were held with the incumbent ED and the ex-ED of each selected NPO. The researcher intended to interview the human resources managers, but none of the participant NPOs had one. Within the constraints of choosing NPOs who met the criteria, the organisation types were diverse to make the findings more generalisable (Eisenhardt, 1989). Eisenhardt (2021) describes this as "the common process design involves choosing cases about the same focal phenomenon in purposefully different settings, thus improving generalizability (i.e. transferability) of the emergent theory across settings."

The participant-NPOs represented a range of sectors, such as education, community development and female empowerment. The staff size during the time of leadership transition ranged from 13 to 60, and the budget ranged from R5 million up to R80 million. The researcher aimed to uncover what succession practices, if any, were followed to achieve leadership transformation. Furthermore, she was interested to see whether these seemingly similar cases would reveal different enablers for leadership transformation (Eisenhardt, 2021).

The Eisenhardt method does not prescribe a specific number of cases (Eisenhardt, 2021) but instead emphasises data saturation or ensuring sufficient data is collected to build a theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). In fact, because of the in-case analysis, Eisenhardt's methodology can be applied to a single case study, although she recognises that generalisation is more challenging with single cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Eisenhardt (1989), four to ten cases are a good number to investigate because if there are fewer than 4 cases, creating a complex theory backed by convincing empirical evidence can be challenging. On the other hand, if there are more than 10 cases, handling the vast amount of data and its complexity can become overwhelming (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The initial number of participating case studies in this study was eight. However, during the interviews of one of the cases, the researcher discovered that one of the case studies did not meet the criteria as it was part of a university and not an independently registered non-profit organisation. Although seven case studies would have been sufficient, the researcher found an additional NPO through her work as a consultant in the NPO sector a few months after concluding the initial interviews that met the criteria and decided to include it. Having this many case studies assisted in identifying common constructs such as the role of the executive director, informal learning and development, and "mitigated alternative explanations" (Eisenhardt, 2021). In total, 20 interviews of about an hour to an hour and a half each were conducted.

As stated by Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), semi-structured interviews are often used in qualitative research. The researcher conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to allow a flexible framework to derive data that could not be gathered from structured interviews (Morse & Field, 1995). Although the researcher developed a detailed interview guide, see Appendix A and B, with predetermined open-ended questions, which were asked in a systematic way, the participants were not forced to answer the questions in a specific manner (Struwig et al., 2013). The researcher allowed for additional questions to emerge from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This gave the researcher and the participant the opportunity to co-create knowledge (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). However, unlike unstructured interviews, the researcher did hold some control over the participant's response (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

The interviews were either conducted face-to-face (Irvine et al., 2013; Shuy, 2001) or via a video conferencing platform such as ZOOM or TEAMS. The latter option was due to the fact that many of the participants were not based in the same city or province as the researcher and most of the interviews took place whilst COVID restrictions were regarding in-person meetings were still in place .

The interview schedule consisted of the procedures for interviews, such as the interviewee consent, the basic information being collected (Jacob & Furgerson, 2015), and open-ended questions (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interview schedule also contained basic demographic questions such as race and level of education and questions and associated probes regarding the research question (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Once the interview protocol was developed, it was piloted with the first case study participant, which allowed the researcher to rehearse and test whether the questions encouraged the anticipated responses (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The interviews were audio-recorded on Otter AI due to the level of detail required from the responses (Bailey, 2008).

3.7 Data analysis methods

According to Eisenhardt (1989), one of the prominent qualities of building theories from case studies is that data analysis and data collection often overlap. The researcher's field notes were vital for achieving this overlap as some of the researcher's observations and thoughts during the interview were captured in the field notes (Eisenhardt, 1989). Before the analysis of interview data took place, the researcher transcribed the audio files (Bailey, 2008; McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

As Yin (1984) acknowledged, the analysis phase was the most time-consuming, as the case studies required multiple levels of analysis within a single study. For this study, further cross-case analysis was also conducted (Eisenhardt, 2021). Before cross-case analysis, the researcher conducted within-case analysis to best deal with the significant volumes of data. This process involved detailed case-study write-ups and descriptions critical to the insights (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gersick, 1988). While there is no universally accepted format for this type of analysis, it is a valuable tool for researchers to become thoroughly familiar with each case and gain a deep understanding of it. This approach also allows for unique patterns to emerge from each case before generalising those patterns across cases. (Eisenhardt, 1989). The researcher endeavoured to tell the stories of each participant-organisation from the perspective of both the incumbent ED and the ex-ED and included rich detail to make each case more persuasive and exciting (Eisenhardt, 1991).

The cross-case data analysis phase for the Eisenhardt method includes three important types of analysis: constant comparison, replication logic and cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 2021). A cross-case analysis is essential to avoid reaching premature or false conclusions (Eisenhardt, 1989) and generate a more reliable and inspired analysis (Eisenhardt, 2021). The constant comparison involves the organising and grouping of the data and then repeatedly comparing the developing theory (especially the concepts and the relationships between data) and the data to construct an increasingly close correlation between the two, whether within or across cases (Eisenhardt, 2021; Walsh et al., 2015). Replication logic describes the process of applying constant comparison within each separate case and not treating a case as merely a data point in a broader study ((Eisenhardt, 2021). For example, the researcher investigated and compared the views of the incumbent ED and the ex-ED of a single NPO on the role of policies or learning opportunities. This was followed by cross-case analysis which involved looking at the data from many different angles, such as comparing two cases and listing resemblances and variations (Eisenhardt, 1989). The researcher compared the data of some cases with underlying similarities such as having funders on the board of trustees or two of the NPOs where the ex-ED stepped down from the leadership role but remained in employment of the organisation.

For further cross-case analysis, several tables were designed where similarities and differences were compared. This assisted in identifying the similarities or differences in explanations to "why" questions, which is critical to developing theoretical arguments (Eisenhardt, 2021; Gehman et al., 2018).

Once the researcher conducted several cross-case analyses, the data was compared with a wide range of relevant literature (Eisenhardt, 1989). For example, comparing the role of policies according to the literature versus in the participant NPOs (Eisenhardt, 1989) and including literature on NPOs as well as the public and private sectors. Both similar and conflicting findings were discussed.

Using Eisenhardt's approach led to new concepts emerging from the analysis process itself which the researcher did not anticipate (Eisenhardt, 1989). The ultimate theory reflects a combination of concepts, the connection among the concepts, and why these concepts are connected (Gehman et al., 2018).

3.8 Criteria

The study aimed to develop a generalisable, dependable, rational and empirically valid theory (Gehman et al., 2018) and to ensure credibility and authenticity as these criteria are essential when using case study research design (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Laverty, 2003). This is possible when correctly applying the Eisenhardt method, as developing and testing theories are intertwined (Gehman et al., 2018). As discussed in the data analysis section, there was a continuous comparison between the theory and the data (Eisenhardt, 1989). The theory emerging on succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs was correlated with existing literature related to the topic (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.8.1 Generalisability

Generalisability in academic research refers to the extent to which the results and conclusions of a study can be validly applied to or have relevance for a larger population or broader context beyond the specific sample, setting, or conditions under investigation (De Vos et al., 2005). It is a crucial consideration in assessing the external validity of research findings and involves determining the extent to which findings can be generalised to other populations, settings, or times (De Vos et al., 2005).

Ensuring generalisability requires considering several critical factors throughout the research process for which Eisenhardt (2021) provides valuable insights. One important consideration is the careful selection of the study sample. Eisenhardt (1989) emphasises the importance of purposeful sampling to ensure that the chosen

participants are representative of the broader population under investigation. Furthermore, Eisenhardt (1989) recommends sampling from diverse sources or contexts to increase the external applicability of the findings.

Replication of the study in different settings or with different populations is another strategy to enhance generalizability. Replicating research helps verify the consistency of findings across various conditions, thereby strengthening the external validity of the study (Eisenhardt, 1989). Generalisability is furthermore supported by transparent and detailed reporting of the research methodology, including the study's context, sample characteristics, and data collection procedures. This transparency enables other researchers to assess the relevance of the findings to their own contexts and populations. (De Vos, 2005).
Generalisability was addressed by not only selecting very similar case studies and, therefore, likely to have the same phenomena occurring (Eisenhardt, 2021). The research included NPOs of different staff and budget sizes, years in existence and operating in different sectors, e.g. literacy, climate change and social justice. By applying this approach, the researcher hoped to contribute to the broader applicability and relevance of the findings in academic research.

3.8.2 Credibility

In academic research, credibility is defined as the degree to which the research findings accurately and reliably represent the studied phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It is an essential aspect of research quality and is crucial for ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of study outcomes. Azungah (2018) emphasises that credibility in qualitative research involves establishing confidence in the study's results and interpretations. Credibility is closely linked to the concept of internal validity, ensuring that the study accurately reflects the participants' experiences and perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Researchers must employ various strategies to enhance credibility and address potential threats to the truthfulness of their research.
Azungah (2018) suggests employing member checking, where participants review and confirm the accuracy of the findings, adding a layer of validation to the research process. Baxter and Jack (2008) advocate for prolonged engagement in the field, emphasising that spending sufficient time with participants allows researchers to develop a deep understanding of the context, reducing the risk of misinterpretation. Therefore, the researcher's years of experience and understanding of the NPO context assisted in addressing credibility. Triangulation, involving the use of multiple data sources or methods, is another strategy recommended by both Azungah (2018) and Baxter and Jack (2008) to enhance the credibility of research findings. Furthermore, the participants' own words were used in the text to increase credibility (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability in academic research refers to the reliability and consistency of research procedures and findings over time. Ensuring dependability is crucial for establishing the trustworthiness of research outcomes. De Vos et al. (2005) highlight key strategies to enhance dependability, emphasising the importance of consistency in research design, data collection, and analysis.

To achieve dependability, researchers should establish a clear and well-documented research process, ensuring that other researchers can replicate or repeat the study. This involves providing a detailed account of the research design, data collection methods, and analytical procedures. Consistency in these aspects contributes to the stability of results and increases the likelihood of obtaining similar findings in repeated studies (Middleton, 2019).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) recommend the use of an audit trail to enhance dependability. An audit trail involves documenting every step of the research process, from the formulation of research questions to data collection and analysis. This comprehensive record allows other researchers to follow the study's progression and verify the accuracy and consistency of the reported findings. It also aids in identifying potential sources of error or bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The researcher kept a detailed record of each step of the research, including digital recordings, written transcriptions, field notes and iterative conclusions of each phase of the study.

In summary, dependability in academic research involves maintaining consistency, structure, and documentation throughout the research process. It ensures that the study's procedures are reliable and that the findings can be trusted over time. By following the guidelines provided by De Vos et al. (2005) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the researcher strengthened the dependability of the research, which contributed to the overall credibility of their work.

3.8.4 Authenticity

Authenticity in a study is critical to ensure that the real voice of the case study participants is heard in the research (Rowley, 2002). The researcher achieved this by including a high number of quotes from all the participants in each case study. Authenticity was further enhanced by cross-checking the transcripts from the original interviews (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015).

3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability, the proof of the researcher’s neutrality, is a critical component of the trustworthiness of a study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It refers to establishing whether the data and interpretations of the findings of a study

are grounded in the data and not based on the researcher's preferences or opinions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher of this study ensured that an audit trail of transcripts, notes and tables for data analysis are available to ensure confirmability.

3.9 Limitations

Due to the purposive selection of the case studies (McIntosh & Morse, 2015), the research will not reveal the complete picture of succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs, as only organisations which have been successful at this were included.

As the researcher works in the NPO sector and knows some participants and their employers, subjectivity could be a limitation (Azungah, 2018). The researcher mitigated bias and subjectivity by employing methodological rigour and reflexivity. Multiple data sources, such as interviews, notes, and observations, enhanced data triangulation and minimised reliance on a single perspective (Yin, 2014). Maintaining a reflexive journal allowed the researcher to document and reflect on her biases, promoting transparency and self-awareness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Adhering to established protocols and engaging in constant self-reflection enhanced the credibility and validity of the case study findings.

Furthermore, it is also possible that the interviewees recalled past events differently from what happened (Gioia et al., 2010). This was addressed by asking similar questions to both the incumbent and ex-ED and comparing their answers during the in-case analysis process (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The scope of the research was limited to factors that impact succession planning for leadership transformation within the workplace (Gioia et al., 2010). Although the study did not consider broader external factors such as the upbringing or tertiary education of the incumbent ED, the importance and impact of the participant ED's life story is recognised in the discussion chapter.

3.10 Ethics

The researcher was committed to an ethical approach throughout the research process. The research was approved by the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee (see Appendix D). All the research participants had to sign an informed consent form before the interview (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015). The template consent form is included as Appendix C. They were made aware of the purpose of the research, that it is conducted through the University of Cape Town and of their rights as participants (Terblanche et al., 2018). The participants were informed before the interview that they could request the audio recordings of the interview and withdraw should

they have any concerns with the research (Jacob & Furgerson, 2015). The confidentiality of the participants was respected and specific contextual details that could have breached confidentiality were changed (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015). Each participant organisation was given the name of a planet to support confidentiality. The researcher did the transcriptions, and all files were saved in a password-protected folder. As some of the participants were ex-colleagues of the researcher, there was a risk of researcher bias. The researcher addressed potential bias by reflecting on how her view has changed by the research process, as well as triangulation of other data sources, such as the literature, to "cross-check and validate the evidence" (Azungah, 2018; Leitch et al., 2010).

4. Research Findings

For confidentiality reasons, each NPO who participated in the study were given names of planets. This chapter starts with two tables to provide background information and context of the NPOs and the EDs who participated in the study.

Table 1 and Table 2 provide background information on each NPO and the incumbent and ex-ED.

Case Study	Year of registration	Budget (at time of transition	Staff size	Succession/ Transition period	Board racial diversity White/Black
Jupiter	1976	R13 million	20	4 years	50/50
			80 volunteers		
Mars	1993	R7,3 million	25	2 years	Only 1 black trustee
Mercury	2019	R80 million	60	1 year	20% white
			volunteers		
Neptune	1994	R10 million	50	1 - 2 years	50/50
			20-30 volunteers		
Pluto	1994	R 4,5 million	15	5 years	50/50
Saturn	2019	R25 million	13	18 months	30/30/30
Uranus	2012	R11 million	17	6 months	50/50
Venus	2003	R5 million	11	9 months	50/50

Table 1 Background data on case study NPOs

Case Study	Position	Race & Gender	Year appointed as ED	ED joined the NPO	Left the ED role/ NPO	Succession/ Transition period
Jupiter	ex-Director	White female	2008	2008	Mar-21	4 years
	Director	Indian female	2021	2004		
Mars	ex-Director	White Female	1993/founder	1991	2022	2 years
	Director	Indian female	2022	2019		
Mercury	ex-Director	White Male	2017	2017	Nov-21	1 year
	Director	African Female	2021	2019		
Neptune	ex-Director	White Male	Jun-05	2000	Oct-19	1 - 2 years
	Director	African female	Oct-19	2018		
Pluto	ex-Director	White Male	2014	2000	2014	5 years
	Director	African Male	2019/2020	2003		
Saturn	ex-Director	White male	2016	2014	2021	18 months
	Director	Indian female	2021	2016		
Uranus	ex-Director	White female	2018	2013	2021	6 months
	Director	African female	2021	2016		
Venus	ex-Director	White female	2003	2010	Jul-18	9 months
	Director	Coloured male	2018			

Table 2: Background data on the ex-ED and incumbent ED's tenure

4.1 Jupiter

Jupiter was registered as an NPO in 1976. The organisation's budget in 2021 was R13 million. The ex-ED, a white female, joined Jupiter in 1996 and became ED in 2008.

Jupiter had a track record of appointing EDs from within the organisation. It was only in 2015 when the board comprehended that it would be illegal to continue to renew the ED's contract for 5-year periods, that they became aware of the importance of developing a succession plan. Formal plans were developed for the critical leadership positions and, later, for all the technical roles within the organisation. These were approved by the board but as

the ex-ED was only leaving in a few years, staff members and the board treated it as an intellectual exercise. To quote the incumbent ED, the plans were saved *"in the world of the cloud"* and not given further attention. There was a sense that the board saw succession planning as necessary but not urgent. Only when the ex-ED had formally announced her intention to leave in 2019 did a succession plan become a priority. She was motivated to try something new after nearly 20 years with the organisation. Although the ex-ED made the decision to leave during this period, a traumatic incident in which she was questioned "*how she could speak for black women"* and running *"an elitist, non-representative organisation"* made her "cut those ties and not look back".

Although the board recognised the importance of succession and leadership transformation (influenced by B-BBEE and the Employment Equity Act), the ex-ED drove the process.
On her recommendation, the board offered the then Deputy Director, an Indian female, the role of ED. At the time, the deputy had worked for Jupiter for more than 15 years. She was promoted from a frontline position to senior management during her tenure. The ED and deputy had worked together for more than ten years and had a very strong working relationship. The ex-ED was confident that the deputy could lead the organisation successfully and was committed to giving her the support and mentoring she needed to advance into the ED role. However, despite a track record of promoting from within the organisation, the lack of a promotion policy proved to complicate the process.

The deputy director considered stepping into the ED role for two reasons. Firstly, it would allow her professional growth as she would be able *"to challenge, raise voices and concerns differently"*. Secondly, it would force her to leave the organisation at the end of the 5-year contract and do something new in her career, a push she felt she would need. She only accepted the role once her husband and children reassured her that they supported the decision, and the board agreed that the incumbent ED would continue supporting her, especially on fundraising, after her appointment. This was crucial as the fundraising function was exclusively held by the ED, hence the incumbent ED had no previous exposure to fundraising, although it was so critically important for the sustainability of the organisation.

The board was all female, 50% white, and 50% black (including African blacks and coloureds). It was less diverse in 2021 than in the past three years. The incumbent ED was very conscious of being the *"first person of colour in leadership"*. She had frank conversations with the board regarding the support she required to ensure that she is not *"set up for failure"*. She had to explain to the trustees that her experience, as a black person, transitioning to leadership level would differ significantly from a white person's experience as there was a *"different psychological aspect around confidence and impostor syndrome"*.

Although there was no training and development policy in place, organisational and personal development was integral to the organisation. Jupiter has an embedded culture that supports the creation of strong, independent women. They strive to be a learning organisation and set aside an annual training and development budget. Everyone at Jupiter was encouraged and supported to learn and develop, from the volunteers to the board. According to the ex-ED, everyone was expected to be *"developing all the time".* The development was not only focused on skills but was "a constant ideation process" as it addressed *"their attitudes, their philosophies, their ideas because it talks to the empowerment of women. And it talks to our role in society."* According to the ex-ED, continuous development of the management team and ensuring opportunities to lead were critical elements of the transition plan and handover process. How to take responsibility and being held accountable for ones actions were taken seriously by everyone in the organisation.

The incumbent ED described her predecessor as a dedicated teacher who not only highly valued transferring skills but was also keen to learn herself. Unlike some other NPOs, she ensured that organisational and skills development were a priority. She had also implemented formal structures and processes to formalise learning. The structured bi-annual performance management processes and monthly one-to-one meetings with line managers informed staff development. Jupiter staff also had access to monthly meetings with an external supervisor.

There were also many on-the-job development opportunities. For example, whenever a manager went on leave, one of the team members would occupy that role. At the director level, it included extended periods when the previous director was on study or sick leave. Also, it was normal practice for junior staff to join senior management at meetings with external funders and partners. This practice meant that by the time the Deputy Director took over as ED, she had already established relationships with key funders and partners.

In contrast, the opportunities to establish relationships with the trustees or learn how to run board meetings were limited. However, board meetings were transparent as the ED, Finance Manager, staff representative, and volunteer attended the meetings. Only during the last year of the transition period did the deputy attend the board meetings.

For the incumbent ED, her most valuable experience leading up to this role was coming from the frontline and working her way through the ranks. Having a first-hand understanding of the importance of the services Jupiter delivers keeps her connected and grounded, even as she leads the organisation at the executive level. The coaching she received during the transition period also assisted her in preparing for the ED role. For her, the ethnicity of

the external coach was not a factor, purely their skills and experience. Furthermore, a longstanding network of friends in related professional fields provided support and mentoring as needed.

The ED announced her intended departure in 2017 and shared with the board that she had faith that the then-operations manager could become the ED. A Strengths Finder-accredited coach was appointed as an advisor to work with the leadership transition team formed by Jupiter. The team comprised the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the ED and the three members of the senior management team. They met every six weeks over a two-year period. One of the first issues they had to address was the perception of "*having the single sort of hero leader that has all the institutional memory and knowledge and leaves, and then you have a headless organisation running around like a headless chicken."* The ex-ED "*had to deal with that fear and call it out as a bit of a myth and reminded each of them that they all have tremendous institutional knowledge."* Another challenge the ex-ED had to address was the senior management team's resistance to reporting to one of their peers in the future. They struggled with the idea that someone like them, whose flaws they knew, could *"step up in the hierarchy and be someone that they could look up to."* These issues were addressed by establishing the idea of "collective leadership," which everyone contributes to. Each senior management team member did the Strengths-Finder Assessment to build their confidence in their own skills. Strengths-Finder was eventually rolled out to all staff members to make them realise that everyone has the skills to contribute to the organisation.

Although they made progress during this time, this approach did not work as well as expected. According to the ex-ED, one of the challenges was that the coach's expertise was in working with individuals, not teams. She did not understand *"democratic representation"* and failed to ensure that the transition team functioned as a team. Secondly, the board chair did not share the learnings from the transition sessions with the rest of the board. This became apparent shortly before the ED's departure when her exit terms had to be finalised. Although the planned terms were minuted in previous board meetings, it was as if the trustees did not internalise the action points and could not recall why those terms were agreed. The ED experienced a sudden breakdown of trust between her and the deputy on the one side and the board on the other. The board was not prepared to agree to the original terms and significantly reduced the number of days and the nature of the ED's support to the organisation post-departure. She spent hours reassuring the board that the transition team planned for the required risk mitigation during the transition period. The ex-ED believed other personal dynamics influenced the board's decision to reduce her support and effectively her guaranteed income. In the end, she purely provided fundraising support.

Although no ringfenced budget was set aside, an estimated R1 million was spent on succession in the four years leading up to the ex-ED's departure.

The ex-ED regrets not calling out the racial dynamics within the board that was risking the new ED's succession. She was concerned that because she was white, she might trigger some of the black board members if she did. However, with hindsight, the incumbent ED realised they missed an opportunity for issues to surface that really needed to like the fact the black women on the board were supportive, but that one specific white woman was calling the process into question and therefore also the appointment of the incumbent, black ED.

4.2 Mars

The ex-ED, a white female, founded Mars and registered it as a non-profit in 1993. The organisation has a budget of about R7,5 million and 25 employees across the remote rural area in which they work. The ex-ED officially handed over the reins in February 2022. She was motivated to retire following the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown to spend more time with her family elsewhere in South Africa and the world.

The incumbent ED, an Indian female, joined Mars in 2019 as the Programme Manager. She was unemployed at the time as she had resigned from her previous non-profit to join her husband when he relocated to a new province for his job. She successfully used her vast professional network built over nearly 30 years in the sector, both in public and non-profit settings, to secure her role as programme manager in a new province at Mars. She also has close family ties, specifically with her mother and husband, who have supported her personally and professionally. Her mother's encouragement and guidance were particularly invaluable when she considered whether to apply for the ED role at Mars, as she knows the sector well and has supported the incumbent ED's career progression.

The new ED had initially hesitated to apply for the Executive Director post as she was new at Mars. She thought the board (all white other than one black, native African member) would want to appoint another white leader to ensure continued funding from the primarily white local community. However, she decided to apply as she was confident in her skills and experience and believed she was *"ready to learn and lead"*. According to the ED, the board's faith in appointing her and their subsequent support has further helped her grow in confidence to lead. The leadership change has also not negatively impacted their relationship with the local community, as she had feared, as they continue to support and fund Mars.

Neither succession planning nor employment equity were mentioned or described in the organisation's policies. When the new ED joined Mars in 2019, she was not introduced to any of the policies, so she could not comment on which policies they had in place. As part of her post-departure transition support to Mars, the board tasked the ex-ED with reviewing and updating the organisational policies.

The ex-ED was having succession conversations with the board for at least ten years before her departure. They knew she would want to retire in the not-too-distant future, and someone needed to be in place to step into the ED role. Planning for succession was a collective effort by the board and ex-ED.

Although the organisation's policies did not mandate internal succession, the ex-ED identified individuals she believed had leadership potential and invested in their learning and development. Unfortunately, the organisation could not retain them once their newly gained skills increased their employment opportunities in the marketplace. With hindsight, she realised that she was naïve to think that succession was purely about preparing a person for the leadership transition and that she underestimated the importance of preparing the organisation for the change in leadership. She regrets not making staff more aware of the part they all needed to collectively play to create an organisational culture that would ensure that Mars would continue to thrive.

The ex-ED discussed employment equity mainly in terms of the programme participants rather than racial equity within the organisation. It was evident from the conversations with funders and the board that having the best person for the role was the only priority rather than someone black or gender other than men.

According to the ex-ED Mars had an organisational culture supporting staff development, backed by policy and budget. Although the budget varied depending on available funding, Mars endeavored to follow the policy and find funding to meet staff development needs. In the last six years of the ex-ED's lead, she consciously gave a wider group of people opportunities to learn different skills. This ranged from learning to driving to management courses. Once she started the Founder-transition programme, she also implemented informal training sessions and learning lunches to share her knowledge and experience with anyone on the staff who were interested. Every second Friday, they covered topics such as *"how to create a budget, to writing a proposal, to conceptualising a project"*. Every other Friday, it was an open table discussion where anyone could raise questions on a topic they wanted to learn about more. She had hoped that people who were previously not in the forefront of her mind as suitable candidates for promotion would emerge from this exercise. These people may be working in areas of the work they had a specific passion and interest for rather than in the position that was *"next in line"* for ED's role. The staff responded overwhelmingly positively to this opportunity, one example being some of the cleaners doing a course in Early Childhood Development so that they could better understand the service Mars provides.

According to the new ED, she did not receive formal training and development for the two years before her appointment as ED. She came to Mars with many years of experience and training, including leadership and project development, and mainly spent her time learning about Mars's programmatic work. She claims there was

also no informal leadership development, such as acting-up opportunities or attending board meetings before the appointment. The new ED believes this exposure would have been beneficial before becoming ED.

However, she received coaching from an external coach leading up to the leadership transition period, which focused on developing her leadership skills. Once appointed, the coaching shifted to focus on the new role and how the ED would take it on. The other two directors supporting the ED, also received coaching. The coaching had to be put on hold due to other priorities and budget constraints but the incumbent ED was hopeful that this could be picked up again.

Whilst the ex-ED's was the leader, performance appraisals were not held in a formal, structured manner. It was more informal conversations based on the *"family affair"* environment in which the ex-ED knew everyone well, and they all cared deeply for one another. The ex-ED worked hard to recognise everyone's skills and, as previously discussed, gave everyone development opportunities. However, Mars has been working on formalising the performance appraisal process since the new ED was appointed. They recognise it as a helpful tool to identify training needs and assess whether the job descriptions' content is still relevant and suitable.

The new ED described the ex-ED as a very approachable, kind, and understanding person committed to their sector. She learned from her to be more reflective and not rush into making decisions, empathise with programme participants and staff, and build respect and close working relationships with community leaders, which is especially important in rural areas. She highly rates the ex-ED's leadership style and appreciated their mentoring relationship. She did not experience it as a problem that there was a difference in race.

The ex-ED started thinking about retirement and preparing herself about a year before she formally started talking about it. Her request for funding to participate in a development programme prompted the retirement conversation with the board. They were not completely surprised as the ex-ED was over 60 but following this discussion, *"the conversation changed from one day to this will probably happen in the next two years"*. She was keen to do this particular programme as it was developed by a philanthropic foundation for non-profit leaders thinking about leaving their organisations. She credits the programme with helping her personally prepare to leave the organisation she founded and support Mars to prepare for the leadership transition.

The lead-up to the transition formally started in September 2020 when she attended the first module of the development programme. Once the ex-ED announced her retirement to the board, they focused on how to prepare for leadership transition within 18 - 24 months. The board and ex-ED concentrated on which practical arrangements to implement for successful succession rather than on following or developing policies.

The first step, about a year before the ex-ED's departure, for the organisation on the succession planning journey was an externally facilitated staff day during which they discussed the organisation's and its people's strengths, capacity, and leadership requirements. The ex-ED's departure was announced halfway through the day. This announcement led to a powerful session during which staff could give input into what kind of leader they wanted for Mars. These requirements were recorded, and according to the ex-ED the feedback proved very helpful throughout, making the transition process inclusive and transparent. The ex-ED and the board reassured staff that they would keep their requirements of skills and qualities for a new leader in mind during the selection process. It also put some of the responsibility on the staff's shoulders to carry the organisation during the transition and to support the new leader to step into and settle in the position. This open conversation set the tone for a transparent recruitment and transition process. According to the ex-ED, this openness has continued since the incumbent ED stepped up into the position. She has facilitated sessions where the staff shared their views on what she was not doing right or occasions where they have been disappointed. The ex-ED is of the view *"that transparent openness to listening to people of a collective management running an organization and not one person, of the strength of the organization being the collective has been a very, very useful thing."*

The board advertised the role externally and held several interview rounds before they appointed the incumbent ED as the successful candidate. An external coach supported the organisation throughout this process.

Race and gender transformation was not a consideration for the board with the appointment of the ED successor but merely appointing the best person for the job. Although that was the case, the incumbent ED experienced her predecessor as fully committed to transformation and the board as very supportive and caring since her appointment.

Reflecting on the most valuable experience the incumbent ED gained to prepare her for this role, it was not so much the two years at Mars prior to her appointment but two opportunities earlier in her career. Firstly, it was the time spent as a school principal where she gained invaluable leadership experience. The second was a previous non-profit she worked for which was early adopters of new technology. Working in such an environment instilled a habit of continuous learning in her. These experiences and the mentoring she received from the ex-ED reassured her that she was *"ready to learn and lead".*

4.3 Mercury

The ex-ED, a white male, was the founding director of Mercury. Mercury was incubated within their chore funder for nearly two years before becoming an independent NPC in 2019. It, therefore, had access to professional

support staff and processes that start-ups do not often have, such as policies or experienced finance support. The incumbent ED, a black female, was appointed as ED in 2021.

Although succession planning was not written in the policies, according to the ex-ED he was very explicit from the onset about his intention to leave after a few years and hand Mercury over to a black female leader. Moreover, he made it known to the team at the end of 2018 that he planned to leave in three years. For him, a new generation of black leaders needed to take charge in a sector that predominantly had white women in leadership.

The ex-ED officially resigned at the end of 2020 and left Mercury in November 2021. The announcement did not surprise the board as he often reminded them of his intention to leave within the foreseeable future. He was confident that a year's notice would be sufficient to ensure a successful successor appointment and handover period. Although it was not a given that his successor would be an internal candidate, as they had to follow an open recruitment process, he was confident that the board could make an internal appointment. For the ex-ED, it was difficult to articulate exactly what was needed to be a successful leader of Mercury as it was the intangible knowledge that was challenging to define on paper or assess in an interview. He was convinced of the value of appointing someone who already knew and understood the different roles, funders, relationships, and people. However, to ensure a fair recruitment process, he could not openly encourage the internal candidate(s) to apply.

It was not apparent to the incumbent ED that her director identified her as a potential successor. She was not as confident in her skills and abilities as others were. At the time of the previous ED's resignation, she was with Mercury for two years. Although she was familiar with the subject matter, this was her first role outside of academia, which meant a steep learning curve on organisational, financial, and people management when she started at Mercury. It was only with hindsight that she appreciated that her development was purposely designed and encouraged to gain the skills required for the Executive Director role.

Mercury implemented a performance appraisal process to determine the annual performance bonuses and ensure that they are fair. However, this process did not decide the staff development needs at the senior management team level. The ex-ED identified his team's development needs during his regular one-to-ones with them. He was frank in his praise and criticism and supported them to overcome their shortfalls. The incumbent ED acknowledged that these feedback sessions were of great value.

The ex-ED was committed to the development and capacity building of his team, not only for the benefit of his organisation but to build the next generation of sector leaders and support the sector’s future sustainability.

Although there was a budget for staff development, he believed that off-the-shelf training was too generic and, therefore, not helpful.

His approach was to make each senior management team member responsible for an area of work and hold them accountable for delivery or, in his own words, *"like giving people garden patches. So like, here's your patch of garden, you must prosper."* In his mind, it was a case of, *"this is your opportunity to prove yourself but, if this thing flourishes, it is because of you. If it fails, it's also because of you and I wanted to use it both as an opportunity and to be like, this is not going to be easy."*

The incumbent ED admitted that taking on these responsibilities was sometimes very challenging. However, it gave her the opportunity to learn how to present to partners, write funding proposals, build relationships with funders, develop sophisticated presentations, and build credibility within the international academic network in their sector. It significantly supported the incumbent ED to grow in confidence and contribute to Mercury's strategy development, knowing she had first-hand exposure to back up her opinions. She attended board meetings and had the chance to be acting Executive Director for three months while the ex-ED was working on a different project during the COVID lockdown. For her, the practice of sharing decision-making power was invaluable when she became the Executive Director in 2021. The area of development that the ex-ED would have done more of in preparation for the leadership position is financial management skills, as having the confidence to push back and know what questions to ask of the finance team is critical for the executive director.

According to the ex-ED, the CEO of Mercury's founding funder strongly encouraged and supported mentorship in the organisations they funded. All the senior management team members had external mentors. A consultant, a previous NPO ED herself, was engaged to search for the most suitable mentor for each person. This was based on a questionnaire they each completed and input from the ex-ED. For the incumbent ED, the support from her mentor played a critical role in deciding to apply for the leadership post. Her mentor was also an African black woman. She believes this made a considerable difference in their relationship, which has since grown beyond mentorship into a friendship.

Mercury also offered to pay for an executive coach using the 360 Leadership coaching programme for the senior management team members who wanted to take it up, although not everyone did. This included weekly coaching sessions as well as interviews with the ex-ED.

Since becoming Mercury's leader, the incumbent ED has continued to ensure a generous staff development budget and that staff development is encouraged throughout the organisation. The reasons for this are three-fold:

- Firstly, she sees it as part of her duty to build the next generation of sector leaders and invest in the future sustainability of the sector.
- Secondly, she recognises that Mercury is no longer in a start-up phase and, therefore, *"requires a lot more skills rather than personality and characteristic traits and energy"* to operate sustainably.
- Lastly, similar to the previous ED, she intends to exit from Mercury within the next five years to make space for the next leader.

The incumbent ED describes her predecessor as a *"visionary socialist*" who acted as a critical friend and mentor to his team and was always intentional about developing them. Her view was that he initially had a single-minded focus on how to achieve the goals they committed to. However, towards the end of his leadership, he became more people-orientated, possibly realising that it would be impossible to reach the goal without the people.

Although the recruitment of the new leader was mainly led by the ex-ED, the board also enabled internal succession. They identified professional development opportunities for Mercury staff with leadership potential. Furthermore, the core funder, who was also a board member, supported internal succession at Mercury. He was convicted of the value of appointing from within to the executive leadership role based on his experience as a previous NPO Executive director.

The ex-ED recognised early on that supporting the leadership growth of young black talent in the sector was critical for Mercury to achieve its vision. Therefore transformation and working towards their vision became intrinsically linked. He was explicit about the organisation's commitment to racial transformation. The board supported him in this. The ex-ED was motivated to do this by correcting a wrong, not because of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act. However, he recognises that it might have had more influence ten years earlier when workplace equity was less front of mind. He could not remember whether Mercury had an Employment Equity Policy but recalls that the ED of the founding funder emphasised the importance of creating racial equity in the organisation from the start and strongly encouraged him to ensure a diverse staff group. Initially, he found this challenging as his network of people with the skills and experience Mercury required, whom he knew and trusted, was primarily white. In his own words: *"I was quite frustrated. And I even said to myself, which one of these two things want me to do? Build a successful organisation, or transform black people?"* However, he soon realised that building a successful organisation and achieving Mercury's vision, was inextricably linked with building a competent black team and giving them opportunities and time to develop if they did not have the required expertise yet. *"So I did change my mind from thinking this is an organisation to better materials and intervention is to this is the coral reef to develop talents. In particular, black talent. And that mind-shift change helped me."*

Although the ex-ED was upfront about his intention to leave Mercury within a few years, the increasing management load of people and processes, which he disliked, drove him to resign. However, he recognises that the founding funder, offering him a post-exit opportunity, eased the decision to step down as he knew he would have financial security and interesting work for another few months. He admits that although he was fully committed to leadership transformation, his stay might have been extended unnecessarily if he did not know the next step.

At the time of recruitment, the incumbent ED was utterly unaware that her predecessor had been developing her for this role. She was convinced to apply for the position by a combination of factors. She was encouraged by her mentor and the support of her professional network. She knew stepping into the executive director role would be tough but believed she had most of the required skills and experience. Secondly, there was the possibility of an external appointment and the uncertainty that would bring about working for someone she did not know. Lastly and most importantly, she knew she had the support and trust of her peers to take on this challenge. Without the latter, she would not have considered applying for the role.

Mercury ran a competitive recruitment process. The ex-ED had to ensure that it was run fairly and transparently so he could not give the incumbent ED any preferential treatment. Although running it this way made for a much stricter process, the incumbent ED knew she was appointed on merit which increased her confidence that she could succeed in the role of ED. Once she started in the ED role, the board was clear that they would support her to succeed and not set her up for failure. Knowing that the board trusted her further improved her self-belief.

The ex-ED remained with Mercury for a six-month transition period following the new leader's appointment and remains on the board. He made sure that he always deferred to the new ED on any decisions that had to be made. This period was of great value to the ED as she felt she had a safety net and a sounding board to guide her.

4.4 Neptune

Neptune was registered as an NPO in 1994. The previous executive director, a white male, was in post from February 2007 to October 2019 but has been with the organisation since 2000. Several motivating factors made him decide to step down from the leadership role:

- Although he was still committed to Neptune's mission and wanted to continue working for them, he was convinced that it was no longer viable for them to have a white male leader. A particular community upheaval confirmed that it was time for Neptune to get an African black leader.

- He was also at the point of management burnout and did not think he could continue building the work of the organisation.

He had many *"mentoring conversations"* on this dilemma with the then-board Chair before formally discussing it at a board meeting in 2017. The board was fully committed to the leadership transformation and, to some degree, supported the idea of the incumbent remaining in the organisation if they could identify a viable alternative role. Legislation such as B-BBEE and the EEA did not affect the organisation's commitment to transformation. Legally, it would not have had an impact because 100% of their programme participants and 95% of their staff are black. However, it was more of *"an ethical problem"*. He is also of the view that transformation will only succeed if there is a real desire to transform; otherwise, it becomes a tick-box exercise to meet legislative requirements.

The board tasked the ex-ED to explore what similar organisations did to attain leadership transformation successfully and set aside a budget for the succession process. Neptune also had an OD consultant with a longstanding relationship with the organisation who did several pro-bono sessions with the board on the transition process. Despite the board's support of leadership transformation, the ED and, to some degree, the Chair of the Board had to drive the transition process. Once the ex-ED identified a potential future role for himself in the organisation, there were critical conversations to work out the logistics, such as funding his salary once a new ED was appointed.

According to the ex-ED, internal succession planning was not stipulated in any organisational policies, but they had a culture and ethos of empowering their staff. Empowering their local South African staff was one of the key motivators for breaking away from the international founding organisation. He found that one of the consequences of being part of a Northern-based organisation was an influx of international volunteers who were better qualified and more experienced than the local volunteers and, therefore, inevitably developed into senior managers whilst the local volunteers and staff remained in the lower-level roles. Once international volunteering stopped, they started investing in growing their local staff. Although staff development was not formalised in a policy or informed by performance appraisals or individual development plans, as they wanted to create a culture of coaching rather than managing, there was a real commitment to the development of their people. Neptune often initiated organisation-wide training and paid for training or development opportunities. The training ranged from driving lessons to Master's degree courses relevant to the organisation. They had people who started in the kitchen, who developed into bookkeepers and others who worked in the laundry and ended up in the Human Resources office.

Over the years, there were several individuals with the potential to become the next director of the organisation. Although they were mentored and their development supported, they were not interested in running the organisation but wanted to continue delivering programmes.

Neptune is a faith-based organisation, and conviction of the faith is essential for anyone working there. Therefore, an external recruitment process to appoint a new Executive Director was not seen as feasible as one could not be 100% convinced of an unknown individual's commitment to the faith. In consultation with the Chair, the ex-ED approached one of the African-black female board members to discuss whether she would be interested in the role. The board knew her well as she had been involved with the organisation for many years. She grew up in the local community, volunteered in the 1990s and has been a board member for some years. She has held informal leadership positions in her church community and completed a Post Graduate Management Diploma.

Initially, the incumbent ED was resistant to the idea of formally joining the organisation. After a few months of reflection and consultation, she agreed to consider it. The ex-ED realised during the process that she was not someone to jump into anything quickly and had to be *"super clear and super confident but will then take it on entirely."* They agreed for her to join Neptune for 12 months as a deputy to assess whether this was a good fit for her and the organisation with the idea *"to move up the ramp"* towards the Executive Director role. The board reassured her that *"if you want to jump off the ramp at some point, that's fine. But we believe you're the right person, even if you don't believe you're the right person."*

There were several motivating factors that convinced the incumbent ED to join Neptune:

- This role allowed her to have a positive impact on her own people.
- She wanted to show that not all African leaders have an autocratic leadership style.
- Someone from the community needed to lead the organisation.
- Both she and the ex-ED desired to offer the healing that can happen when deep cross-cultural work occurs.

Once the incumbent ED joined Neptune, the ex-ED ensured that there were many opportunities to develop her management and leadership skills. The ex-ED recognised the imbalance of education and development opportunities for black people in South Africa. He, therefore, made genuine efforts to provide transformational and restitutional support to ensure a successful transition of the then-deputy into the ED role.

According to the ex-ED, Neptune had a very open and transparent leadership forum. It did not only include the senior managers but also middle managers and selected front-line staff. This practice allowed everyone to participate in organisation-wide decision-making and learning sessions, including communications and

supervision. The executive director intentionally did not lead the various team and member meetings. Representatives of the leadership forum had a roster for whose turn it was to lead. They often allowed others to present the organisation at a funder's meeting and speak on behalf of the organisation. Whenever the executive director went on leave or travelled for work, he would delegate full leadership responsibility and entrust a staff member with decision-making authority.

The incumbent ED had a baptism of fire shortly after she joined as deputy when the community wanted to shut them down due to an issue of pay for the volunteers. She had to step up to consult and create spaces for people to share and reflect and coached them on how to do it appropriately. She continued to attend the board meetings, not as a trustee but as director of Neptune. She and the ex-ED jointly planned for the board meetings and prepared the board packs.

Mentoring has been essential to the incumbent ED's development journey as it is a safe space to *"ask critical questions without being judged."* During the transition period, the ex-ED mentored the incumbent ED. After a few months, these turned into reciprocal mentoring sessions. He advised her on the leadership of the organisation. She advised him on community engagement. She also found her own mentors for other areas of development, e.g. financial management. The race of the mentor was not a consideration for her, only their skill set. She purposely searched for racial diversity in all spheres of her life. The incumbent ED is part of professional and informal networks in the NPO space. These did not play a part in her decision to take the director role but have been critical support since she started as the director.

For the incumbent ED, it is not a single event, training, or mentoring which has prepared her for this role but her life story. She came from the local community and was a single mom of two children at 21 without matric. She transformed her life because others showed her that *"everyone deserves to be loved and cared for and treated equally"*. She then committed to making a change with people like her. She knew she *"could do little, but I need to do it passionately so that people can know we can be transformed."*

The lesson the ex-ED learned from this process is the importance of the board and executive director having leadership succession and transformation conversations long in advance. Once these conversations take place, they should be intentional about the direction they are moving in. He admits that it can be hard for the ED to accept that they will not be around forever, and there could be a fear that the board might kick you out. However, it is vital to prioritise the organisation's best interests and set aside any personal egos.

4.5 Pluto

Pluto was established in 1994. The incumbent ED, a black male, has been working for Pluto since 2000. He was offered an internship after completing the 18-month programme as a participant. He commented that partaking in the programme and then becoming an employee of Pluto was a life-changing moment for him. The programme taught him resilience, to commit to opportunities and to think of challenges as learning opportunities that *"help him going forward"*. He has also observed this in other programme participants.

The ex-ED, a white male, originally joined Pluto in 1997. He passionately believed in the organisation's mission and its impact on the lives of young people. He left after a couple of years for career development, but when he heard that Pluto was on the brink of closing, he resigned from a well-paid job to join them in 2010 as the Executive Director. His focus in the period up to his departure in 2014 was fundraising to secure the organisation's future sustainability.

According to the incumbent ED, the Ex-ED was committed to transformation in every aspect of the organisation. He ensured that the organisation's values were not only reflected in their programmatic work but also in the governance and structures of the organisation. For example, when the ex-ED rejoined Pluto, he questioned salary inconsistencies between people doing the same job and adjusted accordingly. In the incumbent ED's experience the board was similarly committed to transformation. In 2013 the board transformed from having exclusively white trustees to a more racially diverse board. Introducing diversity at the board led to a broader discussion around leadership transformation at Pluto, which prompted the ex-ED to start planning his exit.

Other factors that influenced his decision were the toll the role was taking on his health and family life due to Pluto's continued financial strain and the potential financial saving for the organisation if they did not have to pay his salary and could promote from within. The organisation was restructured, and the board agreed that the three senior managers would form a *"tri-party executive leadership team"* to cover the executive director's portfolio. The team consisted of one white male, one black male, and a black female. The board initially resisted the team model as they wanted to have a single individual whom they could hold accountable for the leadership of Pluto. However, given the financial challenges of the organisation, none of the individuals were prepared to step up and manage this risk on their own. Once the leadership arrangements were in place, the ex-ED continued for another six months to support the transition. Due to Pluto's tight finances, there was no allocated budget to support the succession process from the ex-ED to the executive leadership team.

According to the incumbent ED, the three individuals were confident that they could successfully run the organisation as a team. They each managed a different piece of the leadership portfolio based on the individual's skills and expertise. To the board's surprise, they managed to pay three-quarters of Pluto's debt within the first two years and agreed on reasonable terms to repay the outstanding debt.

The white male left in 2017, and the black female left in 2019. Hence, there was effectively a five-year transition process from a white leader to a single black leader. This afforded the incumbent ED an extended opportunity to work closely with his executive leadership colleagues and learn from them prior to his appointment as ED. He especially mentioned how valuable it was to have a female in the team as she brought a balance and different view, *"especially when it comes to sort of the emotions and the feelings and the sort of the things that as men we probably wouldn't sort of take into consideration".*

Although there was no succession planning policy, Pluto had a culture of developing staff and providing psycho-social support. According to the ex-ED, *"the heartbeat of the organisation was about development and growth"*. Pluto's reason for existence was not only about supporting the growth and development of the programme participants but also about capacitating staff to be able to step into leadership positions. This notion was confirmed by the incumbent ED, who was always aware of leadership's intent to grow Pluto's internal team.

Even when budgets were stretched, they would fundraise for staff development. It is evident how successful this was by the number of young people employed by Pluto and who have since moved into leadership positions. Staff development happened organically, as there were no annual performance appraisals. However, according to the incumbent ED, they did have personal development plans for which they were held accountable. It is also significant that the founder of Pluto invested in establishing it as a learning organisation from the start. An external organisation assisted them in creating *"learning circles"* in which anyone could give feedback on organisational or programmatic issues without fear of retribution. This process further supported the empowerment of staff. There were many informal development opportunities. Two years before the ex-ED left Pluto, the three senior managers participated in board meetings, took turns attending government funder meetings, and were very involved in programme design and the costing.

The incumbent ED had both internal and external mentors. In all his years with Pluto, only one of the mentors was black. He recognises that it would have been helpful sometimes to have mentors of the same race as him, as they might have understood his context better. However, having mentors of different races with different perspectives allowed him to learn where people come from and for new ideas to flourish. From the ex-ED, he

learned the importance of fairness, kindness, transparency, and being open to listening to staff and try new ideas. He endeavors to practice these in his leadership of Pluto.

Due to the nature of Pluto's work, the incumbent ED has built strong personal and professional networks since he joined in 2000. These relationships supported him when he doubted his ability to take up the leadership role without the support of his colleagues. His networks gave him the validation he needed.

The ex-ED has founded another organisation since he left in 2014. He is more aware of the importance of succession planning years in advance and keeps this in mind for the organisation's recruitment strategy and internal capacity building. He often reflects on the leadership transition process at Pluto and what a challenging personal experience it was for him. As the outgoing leader, he had to accept that the new leaders had their aspirations and that his legacy might be flawed. He believes it would have been invaluable to have had an external advisor to navigate this process with the incoming executive directors and him as the outgoing leader.

Notwithstanding the various funding challenges and moments of self-doubt, the incumbent ED has remained with Pluto as the executive director. He continues to be motivated by the inspiration that convinced him to step into the Executive Director role: For Pluto to continue to provide the same potential life-changing opportunities to its participants as it did for him.

4.6 Saturn

Saturn was established in 2009 but only registered as an NPC in 2019. One of the founding funders incubated it for the first ten years. The annual budget at the time of the leadership transition in 2021 was R25 million. Saturn employed 13 employees in that year.

The ex-ED, a white male, joined Saturn in 2014 as a manager. There were only seven employees at the time. Shortly after he joined, his ED resigned due to health reasons. Although it was critical to appoint a black leader, despite several recruitment rounds, the board could not find a candidate who met their requirements and was within the salary budget. The ex-ED reluctantly agreed to become the interim executive director and was officially appointed in 2016. According to the ex-ED, he had no long-term interest in being an ED and was not at ease as a white male in this role because of Saturn's close working relationship with the government and the fact that *"the majority of our beneficiaries come from a universe that I only see from outside"*.
However, he agreed in 2017 to commit to another two years, which ended up being another four years. The reasons for the delay were two-fold. Firstly, the organisation's strategy shifted, and it was in the process of

registering as an independent organisation, and he felt he had to lead the organisation through this challenging period. Secondly, he had no time to recruit a deputy or plan for succession because of the intense workload, a combination of being the ED and managing his functional portfolio. However, although the incumbent ED was never formally appointed as the deputy, she and the ex-ED, an Indian female, had a close working relationship from when she started with Saturn in 2016.

When the ex-ED joined Saturn in 2014, it primarily had white staff. However, since then, they have consciously tried to build a racially diverse organisation despite not having an Employment Equity policy. Striving for equity was the chore of how the team approached recruitment and has become deeply ingrained in the organisational culture. The board, who consisted of their chore funders and was more operational than normally, fully supported transformation. They recognised that transformation was good for the employees of Saturn and that the diversity of language and ethnicity also positively impacted their work. One of the factors that improved the racial transformation of their staff cohort was not insisting that new employees had to be based at the head office. This was triggered by a female black employee who was on the brink of resigning. Saturn relocated her when she was appointed but she could not settle in the new province and wanted to return home. The ex-ED reassured her that they could not lose her expertise and, therefore, she could be based anywhere.

Although Saturn had a staff development policy and budget and the ex-ED was committed to investing in their development, it was challenging in a small organisation which lacked the operational capacity to formalise training and development and encourage staff to partake in training. However, he ensured that staff with leadership qualities and enthusiasm for Saturn's goals were given opportunities to grow. For him, *"it was really important to give them lots of responsibility and lots of support."* He increased their scope of work and budget, allowed them to make strategically important decisions, represent the organisation externally and build relationships with partners and donors. He gave them the freedom to *"do what they felt they needed to do to deliver on the organisation's goal, rather than what I thought they needed to."* The incumbent ED had complete autonomy over her portfolio of work. The ex-ED trusted the choices she made, not just on the technical side but also with partners and donors.

The incumbent ED could not recall whether staff development policies were in place when she joined Saturn, but she always knew that funding would be available should she want to do any training. Furthermore, the team had a culture of peer learning, especially between the ex-ED and incumbent ED, who worked very closely with each other. Although the incumbent ED only led one portfolio in her previous role, it was Saturn's most important, complex portfolio. It also meant that she held the most critical external relationships and would often externally represent the organisation independently.

Whenever the ex-ED had to make difficult decisions, he would consult with the incumbent ED. Furthermore, she attended the board meetings, and they jointly planned and prepared for board meetings when she started at Saturn. This exposure was valuable preparation for becoming the Executive Director and helped her decide to accept the role, as she already knew and had a relationship with the board members.

According to the incumbent ED, her predecessor treated her as an equal from early on when she joined Saturn. She describes him as *"a white man that's completely conscious and careful of how he acted because he was aware of how his privilege came through in our engagement as a junior staff, or other people"*. Although a hard taskmaster, he was gentle and had a very transparent, hands-off, collegial leadership style. This way of working suited the incumbent ED's way of working and allowed her to grow. They sometimes disagreed and would often have robust discussions before making a decision.

The incumbent ED did not have an external mentor or coach, but the ex-ED acted as a mentor. It was a reciprocal mentoring relationship. She also knew that she could go to any of the board members if she needed to engage on a topic or needed guidance.

As a result of an organisational strengthening process which started in 2021, the incumbent ED is now receiving coaching and has an external mentor. In her experience, the race of the mentor does not make a difference to the quality of the relationship. Throughout her career, the incumbent ED built a strong support network ranging from incumbent board members, previous colleagues, professionals in the same sector, and academics. Her network was especially helpful whilst she was considering the Executive Director appointment. They were an excellent soundboard and provided encouragement and motivation to take the opportunity.

When Saturn applied for a new grant early in 2020, the board and leadership team contemplated the importance of organisational strengthening and leadership transformation. The ex-EDs' view was that the incumbent ED would have been the strongest candidate for the leadership role, even if they conducted an external recruitment process. He shared that the board had her earmarked for the role for some years, but as she initially made it clear that she was not interested in an executive role, they did not pursue it with her. She was, therefore, taken by surprise when they approached her in 2020 and asked whether she would consider the Executive Director role.

She was initially hesitant and took six weeks to decide, as she knew this role would significantly impact her family life. Her overriding motivation to accept the role was a commitment to Saturn's mission. Furthermore, it was her concern for the ex-ED's health. She knew that it was not sustainable for him to continue in his dual role as leader and technical expert and that there was a risk that Saturn might lose him altogether if he did. Thirdly,

the board increasingly showed that they had confidence in her to be the organisation's next leader. She did not want to let them down, given how much faith they had in her. Knowing that the ex-ED backed her appointment and was committed to supporting her transition into the leadership role made her feel more confident that she was ready to step up.

Once the leadership transition was confirmed, the ex-ED proposed to the board and incumbent ED what his focus should be once he is no longer ED. Although he thinks this was different from what the board initially had in mind for him, they agreed as it was within his area of expertise and would make a *"critical contribution to delivering their strategy."*

About six months before the incumbent ED's official appointment, Saturn engaged with a human resources consultant to support them with the transition and capacity-building process. Due to a critically important project that the incumbent ED was managing during the leadership transition, the handover process took about 12 months. Although this was longer than planned, it allowed time to build organisational capacity and a smoother transition. The board recognised the importance of this and supported the spending as needed.

The incumbent ED observed that her close working relationship with her predecessor in the four years leading up to her appointment has been invaluable in ensuring a good transition and preventing awkwardness, given that the ex-ED remained at Saturn. Due to their transparent relationship and her exposure to the board, she was not naïve about what to expect and understood the challenges awaiting her. Awareness of these challenges informed her request for operations management capacity and an improved organisational structure once appointed.

Similarly, although the ex-ED believes the systems set up and delivering the strategy supported the incumbent ED's transition, he regretted not appointing a deputy in the ED role as the incumbent ED would have had the operations support immediately when she became the leader. However, the ex-ED remains proud of his contribution to the transition process and claims the successful leadership transformation at Saturn to be one of his most fulfilling achievements.

The incumbent ED believes having a first-hand understanding of working in the political environment has been the most useful experience to prepare her for the role of ED of Saturn. Knowing the importance of this expertise also gave her the confidence to remind the board that they wanted her "for her strategy and clarity of mind" and therefore needed operations capacity to support her with the day-to-day running of the organisation.

4.7 Uranus

Numeric registered as NPO in 2012. The incumbent ED of Uranus is an African-black female. She was with the organisation for more than five years before her appointment as executive director in July 2021. Her predecessor, a white female, had been in the executive director role for three years by the time she left Uranus. She took over from the founder and was employed by the organisation for nine years. The budget at the time of transition was an estimated R11 million and it had 17 employees.

The incumbent ED started with Uranus as a programme manager. She impressed the ex-ED and others *"from the moment she came into the organisation*". According to the ex-ED, who line managed her most the time, the incumbent ED constantly wanted to learn and grow and was not afraid to push herself or ask for support when she wanted to learn something new. She was also not *"afraid to do the hard work".* After a few years in the programmes role, she wanted exposure to other non-profit functions. When Uranus recruited for a fundraiser, she was successfully appointed to the role, despite competing against external candidates and not having previous fundraising experience. She was promoted to business development manager within a short period, which gave her the same status as others on the leadership team. The incumbent ED was motivated to apply for the fundraiser role and, subsequently, the Executive Director role as she feels passionate about the work and has always known that she wants to grow *"in the sector, making impact either on the ground or leading".* The Executive Director role felt like an opportunity to implement some of her ambitious ideas and making a difference in the sector.

Internal succession planning was not described in staff policies. However, shortly after her appointment as ED, the ex-ED was tasked by the board to plan for succession. She believes this was prompted by the founder's departure after six years in the leadership role, the lack of planning for that and a few founding board members who left. The ex-ED developed a skills matrix with the key skills and experience required for the ED role. This included fundraising capacity, people management, program, oversight, strategy and governance. She then assessed the risk of each member of the senior leadership team against these requirements based on:

- What did they have today?
- What were the gaps?
- What should see develop?
- What would take six to twelve months to develop?
- They had sufficient experience and exposure.
- They had some exposure but would need some experience.

She presented this to the board and shared what she believed was *"a couple of bright stars in the leadership constellation"*. Although the board did not share this with the leadership team as they did not want to create expectations, they supported the plan.

The ex-ED always had an interest in developing people and found that it came naturally to her. She met individually with her leadership team every two weeks to discuss their challenges and development. She worked *"on finding ways to give people opportunities aligned with their core interests"*.

She incorporated the leadership team into the board meetings, which included presenting their portfolio of work and responding to questions from the board. She also worked with the leadership team to develop their report-writing skills, which improved significantly. She also ensure that she shared the feedback from the board on the quality of the report.

There were also opportunities to get involved in growth projects where the leadership team would alternate who would lead a new area of work. The ex-ED endeavoured to give the incumbent ED ownership in her role of managing the fundraising portfolio but worked in a collaborative, iterative manner to support her. The ex-ED's view was that *"she had the capacity for it. She needed the confidence to do it."*

When the ex-ED went on maternity leave in 2020, she divided the responsibilities between the incumbent ED and one of the senior programme managers. The incumbent ED continued with her fundraising role and took over all operational and finance management functions which included preparing board packs and attending the board meetings. For the incumbent ED her biggest challenge during this time was managing the larger funders. Although the previous ED pulled her into many of these conversations in her fundraiser capacity, it was more challenging handling these on her own.

Although Uranus did not have a formal staff development policy, the ex-ED was of the view that a lot of thinking and planning was done on the development needs of staff and how to give them relevant opportunities. They had a study policy to support tertiary education and an annual budget of approximately R8 000 per person. Training was informed by the annual performance appraisals. The organisation funded the post-graduate qualification studies of both the incumbent and ex-ED.

Employment equity was not mentioned in policies either but rather practised in everyday actions. According to the ex-ED, cultural fit to the communities, either black or coloured, in which Uranus delivered their programmes was a critical consideration for most appointments as most of the staff were in the programmes team. Her view

was that the board had a preference that her successor should be a person of colour but also needed to be a skills match. However, given the importance of cultural fit, any white candidate would have had to be *"stellar in other things"* to make up for that. The board comprised on equal number of white and black trustees, with the incumbent ED and Chair actively working to increase the number of black trustees.

The incumbent ED confirmed that her predecessor was 110% committed to equality and showed it in her actions as well. They often had open conversations about race and some of the issues she, as a white woman could not understand. The ex-ED often encouraged the Fundraising Manager to attend talks and workshops on transformation, diversity and inclusivity. On reflection, the incumbent ED believes it was a missed opportunity not to share the insights from these talks at an organisational level.

According to the incumbent ED, her relationship with her predecessor was built on mentoring, mutual trust and open communication. Knowing that she was trusted supported her personal growth. It also laid the foundation for their continued successful relationship since the ex-ED became a board member. The ex-ED was not afraid to give feedback, *"when it needed to be harsh, it was harsh".* Although the incumbent ED admits that she did not always receive the feedback well, she always knew that it came from a good place. The incumbent ED often questioned the decisions the ex-ED and board made. Although she could not change the outcome, the ex-ED *"made a lot of effort to help her understand where the decision comes from",* and although the incumbent ED might not have agreed, she trusted the ex-ED's judgement. The ex-ED's support whilst the incumbent ED was in the fundraising role was especially important as it was particularly challenging to be in that role as a black woman. She needed *"to watch how I am dressed as a black woman going to any fundraising meeting but as a white person, whether you are female or not, you could literally be in sneakers and people will trust you."* She sought out to establish a network of other black fundraisers when she started in the role as she did not come across many in the space she was moving but this never took off. Since becoming the ED, she made a deliberate effort to establish a support network. With hindsight ,she recognises that she did not *"fully understand how important a support system would be in taking on the leadership role."*

Establishing a network of other black female executives was one of the considerations for the incumbent ED in her choice of leadership coaching programme she signed up for shortly after her appointment as ED. Hearing that they were going through similar experiences to her, helped her to be more confident and to trust her own decisions. She had a coach in the previous year and found it helpful. This influenced her decision to apply for the ED role, as she knew she needed a change.

When discussing her maternity leave, the ex-ED indicated to the board that she might not want to return to work but they asked her to keep an open mind. Furthermore, she did not feel she could leave when lockdown was announced. However, she resigned and gave six months' notice shortly after she returned from maternity leave. She wanted to spend more time with her new-born and was close to burnout after three challenging years as the leader of Uranus. She informed the leadership team shortly after letting their core funders know.

The board led the recruitment and an external recruitment agency supported the process. Although the incumbent ED was her predecessor's preferred candidate for the role, they followed an external recruitment process *"for her to have the legitimacy from everybody that she needed"*, especially as one other internal candidate also applied for the role.

Due to the fact that the ex-ED was on maternity less than a year earlier and documented every process, the handover was only six weeks. However, she continued to provide four hours/month consultancy support for another three months. She also remained on the board and had an understanding with the incumbent ED that she would be available to support her should she need it.
Although the incumbent ED recognises the value of having a fundraising role before stepping into the ED role, it is her personal experiences that have shaped her most for this role.

She grew up in a township and went to 10 different schools from Grade 1 to Matric. These were different types of schools, including free government schools, Model C schools and private ones. This experience has taught her *"to relate with people at all different levels in all different ways and being able to shape shift"*.

She also reflected on the time when her predecessor asked her to take on more work when she went on maternity leave. The incumbent ED was going through a very traumatic time in her personal life and did not think she had the bandwidth to increase her workload, but she coped, and it built her confidence.

After more than two years in the executive role, she continues to be stretched, challenged and inspired in this role and the people she works with. *"It makes me want to stay. It makes me want to realize all those dreams that we have."*

4.8 Venus

The ex-ED, a white female, was the founder of Venus. She was in the leadership position for about 15 years and left in July 2018. The budget was an estimated R5 million.

At the time of the interview, the most recent Executive Director, a coloured male, left Venus and an acting arrangement was in place. He always intended to be a transitional leader for a few years for the team to get used to the organisation continuing without the founder. He worked at Venus for eight years before stepping into the leadership role, and he held this position for three and a half years before resigning. For this discussion, he is referred to as the incumbent ED.

Neither ED could recall whether succession planning or transformation policies existed in Venus, but both shared and experienced how these principles were practised in the organisation. Although the board supported transformation and succession planning, the ex-ED's experience was that they *"took her lead and did not proactively think about succession or things in place for succession."* The ex-ED intentionally recruited a more diverse board as part of her transformation drive. By the time she left Venus, the majority of trustees were black, including the female chair. According to the ex-ED, the new chair was very supportive to the incumbent ED.

The ex-ED's leadership style had a considerable influence on the personal and professional development of the incumbent ED. He believes she had a massive impact on his *"sensitivity to community development, sensitivity to transformation and his sensitivity to leadership"*. He described her as a facilitative leader who was collaborative, consultative, and fully committed to transformation. His view was that the ex-ED developed an organisation based on a philosophy of building understanding through listening and practising reflection. Although she was sometimes too humble, she also did not shy away from having hard, awkward conversations with the team. A few months before her departure from Venus she introduced her team to a Hebrew word for humility, "Anava", meaning find your rightful place, nothing more, nothing less. The incumbent ED believes this is what she tried to practice as a leader.

Although an employment equity policy was in place, personal conviction rather than legislation or policy motivated the ex-ED to build an equitable organisation. The incumbent ED observed an *"unwritten commitment"* to justice in their approach to work and with each other. They openly and often acknowledged and discussed the legacy of apartheid and its impact on the communities within which they worked as well as the people in the organisation. They practised the values and principles of justice and equity in the service delivered to their participants and their interactions with each other. For him, this was one of the privileges of working at Venus. He recognised that in non-profits, there is often an incongruence between the organisation's internal practices and the issues they aim to address externally.

According to both EDs, Venus had a transparent staff development policy and invested heavily in the development of their team. Each staff member received R5 000/year, irrespective of their role, and had up to 21 days of study leave per year.

Performance appraisals took place twice a year and were a very collaborative process with the opportunity for reciprocal feedback, not only on the individual but also on the organisation. They discussed the individual's development plan at the performance appraisal at the end of each year. There was a very high take up of these development opportunities for personal growth. For example, two employees who started as kitchen aids completed various diplomas and progressed to programmatic roles. Anyone could request increased funding if they required it for work-related training. Venus funded the degrees and post-graduate qualifications of both executive directors.

The development focus was not only on the individual but also on joint organisational learning.
Significant time was spent on skills development, developing relationships, building a sense of agency and leadership development. It was part of their practice to develop their staff and promote internally. Therefore, they also had good staff retention as the staff felt they were growing.

Furthermore, there were many no-cost development opportunities for the ex-ED. All staff participated in a quarterly reflective process where they could inform the strategic thinking about the programmes or other internal systems. Through this practice staff co-designed the monitoring and evaluation system. Furthermore, the incumbent ED joined the ex-ED on all the funder meetings during the two years before she left Venus, and he facilitated site visits for external stakeholders. He, therefore, had relationships with most of the funders by the time he became the executive director. He often represented Venus at conferences, in Parliament, and national government department meetings.

The incumbent ED had both a mentor and a coach in the years leading up to becoming the ED of Venus. In both cases, they were white, but he did not feel that made any difference to the quality of the support or their relationship.

He also had a strong support network of personal and professional connections, which he developed over 20 years. His network consisted of people with different skills and knowledge who worked at various levels but grappled with many of the same challenges and frustrations. Their support model was like a *"lemniscate",* continuously giving and receiving and was invaluable to him. Having this strong sense of being connected with others in the social development sector has become an integral part of who he is as a person.

The ex-ED's burnout nearly ten years before her departure triggered the board discussion about succession planning. The board agreed they needed increased leadership capacity to ensure the organisation's sustainability. This led to the recruitment of an operations manager to support the ex-ED. Shortly after, they reflected on their facilitators' leadership empowerment work with the programme participants and whether these facilitators felt empowered inside Venus. Many of their facilitators came from the Venus programmes; hence, they were teaching others about having a voice but were not necessarily experiencing that inside the organisation running the programmes. Management, therefore, created leadership within the teams and a centralised leadership structure with team representation. They also implemented a rotational leadership model in 2012 for a couple of years. Therefore, each manager on the leadership team had an opportunity to run a different department for a few months before moving on to the next. This model continued for two years before it stopped. The managers found it challenging to continuously move on to the next role as they mastered their incumbent role. However, for the incumbent ED, this period was instrumental as by the time he settled in the Programme Manager role, he had in-depth knowledge of every aspect of the organisation. For the three years before becoming the ED, he also led practice development and team strengthening workshops for their partner organisations which were developed based on Venus's internal practices. It was a rare opportunity for a programme manager to develop and run these workshops. Therefore, by the time he became Executive Director, he had a strategic view and holistic thinking about how best to run Venus. Although these were not intentional succession planning methods, they were excellent ways of preparing for leadership succession. As illustrated by this example, the practices built into the organisation supported long-term succession planning, despite lacking an allocated budget for long-term succession planning.

The Ex-ED decided to leave in July 2017, handed in her notice to the board, and announced her resignation to the team in November 2017. She left the leadership role in July 2018. She was motivated to resign after completing her Master's degree, which looked at power dynamics in leadership practice and her capacity to build leadership. She became increasingly aware that it was not appropriate for her, as a white woman, to continue to lead Venus. She knew the dynamics in the organisation had to shift but it *"was very hard to untangle"*. As much as she was trying, she was not the one who could do it, as *"whiteness has a particular way of working."*
Shortly after her resignation, the Venus team had a three-day team retreat, facilitated by an external facilitator, to process and jointly plan for the transition. The discussion included the priorities for the transition period, practices to implement, and the kind of leader Neptune needed. This process continued with weekly feedback and update sessions.

Although the board was supportive, the ex-ED led the actual succession planning process. The board agreed on an external recruitment process as the incumbent ED was initially uninterested in applying. However, he realised

this would be a good development opportunity to *"lead from the front"* and not the back as he was used to. He was also strongly encouraged by partner organisations and the participants who knew him. He came out with the top scores for technical skills and organisational fit in the recruitment process. Once he accepted the role, the board was very involved in thinking through the support the new ED would require and the specifics of the transition handover. The transition plan included leadership support and regular coaching sessions.

There was only a one-month leadership overlap. However, the ex-ED continued to support the fundraising efforts and acted as a mentor for another six months. However, her support was part-time, and she had no agency or authority during this time. The ex-ED observed that the incumbent ED *"naturally was actually starting to lead"* in the year leading up to his appointment as the executive director. He noticed organisational gaps or ways of shifting things which she did not. Therefore, there was little to hand over to him as he was already entrenched in the role.

On reflection, the ex-ED regrets that she did not explicitly address and act on some of the organisation's race dynamics before leaving. Although Venues did race-based awareness work a year before the ex-ED left, some white management team members were not truly committed and supportive of transformation. They undermined the incumbent ED when he stepped into the role, making it unnecessarily challenging for him.

Having had a leader who was *"non-possessive about the steering wheel"* combined with a coach who assisted him in having confidence in his leadership abilities were some of the most valuable experiences for the incumbent ED in preparation for the role. He also recognised that the backdrop to his personal development was an organisational culture which enabled him to develop insights about his relationship with power, the dynamics of race and gender, how to bring oneself into spaces, and being allowed to make mistakes. It was a priceless experience to be in an organisation committed to collaboration, reflection, transformation, and the sharing of power.

5. Research Discussion

5.1 Creating diverse, inclusive NPOs and enabling transformation

Whilst there was an acknowledgement of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003 (Arya & Bassi, 2011), the research findings of this study support the idea that the regulations associated with B-BBEE had limited impact on the need for increased racial transformation in the South African NPO sector (Samdanis & Ozbilgin, 2020).

NPOs that participated in this study were not required to adhere to EEA or B-BBEE regulations due to budget or staff size. Instead, a majority of the leaders were intentional about the need to create a diverse and inclusive workforce. Therefore, in concurrence with Burger et al. (2016), organisations (NPOs) were found to be deliberate in their drive to overcome the failures of legislation. Furthermore, this approach is different from other sectors where leaders view creating a diverse workforce as a Human Resources (HR) responsibility (Oosthuizen et al., 2019). It is interesting to note that only one study participant, Jupiter, had an Employment Equity policy in their HR documents and staff handbooks. The majority of the NPOs who participated in this study had no human resources function in the years that led up to their leadership succession. Instead, diversity and inclusion practices were driven by their leaders.

Despite the lack of policies, the leaders of these organisations, other than Mars, were intentional about the need to increase racial diversity and inclusive practices within their organisations. For Venus and Neptune, it was an ethical consideration to build a more equitable organisation that better reflects the people of South Africa. Neptune purposefully stopped international volunteering from the global North in their strive for diversity. Mercury, Pluto, Saturn and Uranus recognised that they would not be able to achieve their mission without a racially diverse workforce which mirrors the communities they work with or those who would feel the impact of their work the most. Saturn acknowledged that diversity of ethnicity and language positively impacted their work and organisational culture and therefore were critical to their mission.

This appears to align with the views of Brown (2002) and Cornforth (2003) that non-profit organizations (NPOs) are under pressure to increase diversity to achieve their strategic goals. However, in addition to the general pressure for increased racial diversity, it emerged from the data that it was largely personal conviction and discomfort among whites who held leadership positions that motivated the increase in diversity and that ultimately led to their resignations from leadership positions. NPOs Neptune and Jupiter experienced intense community pressure, whilst Saturn and Mercury experienced challenges during a government partnership. However, none of these outside pressures led the boards of these NPOs to ask their Executive Directors to step down. Instead, it was

the EDs' own decision to either do so for transformation or to do so for personal reasons, and while doing so, support leadership transformation. In the case of Mercury, the ex-ED even announced, shortly after his appointment, his decision to leave within five years and be replaced by an African-Black female.

In contrast with the literature, none of the participants in the study raised external pressure from funders as a motivator for increased diversity or to ensure leadership transformation (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013).

Within Mars, equity and diversity was discussed as a key consideration that affected their programme participants but not their staff or leadership. In contrast with the literature (Fredette et al., 2016), the only consideration that the board of Mars and funders applied during the appointment of new staff was getting the best people for the role. One reason for adopting this approach arose from the fact that Mars operated in a remote, rural area and only had one board member of colour. This led the incumbent ED, an Indian female, to believe that she would not be successful in securing the role as she had perceived that the board would appoint a white ED that reflected their main funders who were mostly from the local, white community. Interestingly, the funding support from the local community did change after her appointment (please share some details of how it changed).

As stated by Greer and Virick (2008), staff diversity without an inclusive organisational culture will not support succession planning for leadership transformation. It was therefore critical to investigate the inclusive practices, if any, of the participant-NPOs.

My research aligns with the literature that suggests that both the creation of a diverse organisation and the attainment of inclusivity require intentional effort by leadership to support people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds (Berthoud & Greene, 2001; A. Thomas, 2002; Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013). In contrast to Brimhall's (2019) position, I argue that merely embedding these practices in work plans or policies has a limited impact on the promotion of inclusion within an organisation. This is proven by the fact that only one of the NPOs in this study, Venus, confirmed that they had an employment equity policy, yet they all achieved leadership transformation. Creating an inclusive organisation was central to the culture of most of these organisations. The ex-ED of Saturn shared that striving for equity was the chore of how they approached recruitment and has become deeply ingrained in the organisational culture. At Neptune the ex-ED described how empowering their staff was part of their culture and ethos.

Additionally, whilst this study supports the significance of incorporating both functional and social inclusion practices like mentorship, induction programs, retreats, and other social events (Bradshaw & Fredette, 2013), it is unclear from the literature how these are implemented in practice.

This study found that the ex-EDs of most NPOs established a leadership team where it was absent. In some cases, this leadership forum was further expanded to include both senior and middle managers that reflected gender and racial representation. By sharing power with potential successors, the organisation facilitated them to contribute to important strategic decisions and the implementation of the strategy. This played a vital role in enhancing the confidence and growth of potential members into leaders within the organisation.

Another key feature of these NPOs was regular one-to-one mentoring meetings between the ex-ED and their leadership team. These meetings were critically important as they facilitated a closer work relationship between the ex-ED and their successor. The case studies consistently highlighted the importance of a high level of transparency and power-sharing in this relationship. It gave the incumbent ED an opportunity to express their opinions on important issues, even though they were not always able to alter the outcome of decisions. Some incumbent EDs also found the sessions very beneficial to build confidence and ready them for the leadership role.

The opportunity to represent the organisation was another way in which ex-EDs empowered others within the NPO. Individuals were asked to build external relationships, lead critically important meetings with stakeholders, make strategically important decisions without interference and provide feedback to the leadership team. These individuals were then held accountable for decisions made within their areas of work but were also given guidance when required.

In nearly all cases, the incumbent ED attended the board meetings before their appointment. Most described it as an invaluable opportunity to gain experience that was very beneficial once they took up leadership positions. At Jupiter, the incumbent ED did not attend board meetings before their appointment, instead, there was always staff representation at all board meetings. However, there were established communication loops at every level of the organisation, including the volunteers, to ensure feedback and inclusivity.

Jupiter reported a good level of success from the systems put in place to ensure feedback and inclusivity, but another NPO, Venus, can be singled out for its unique levels of organisational transparency and inclusivity. This makes them a particularly good example for other NPOs to emulate. At Venus, all staff participated in a quarterly reflective process where they could share their view on strategy, programmes, or systems. The employees openly and frequently recognized and addressed the impact of apartheid on the communities they served and their own staff. They consistently upheld values of justice and equity in their interactions with each other and the services they provided to their participants. The staff felt empowered to address exclusionary behaviour, such as holding

staff retreats only in the "leafy white suburbs" instead of the communities they served. This fostered power-sharing, staff retention and promotion from within for succession planning.

5.2 The succession planning process

According to McKee and Froelich (2016), there are many barriers NPOs must overcome to appoint an internal successor. Some of these barriers are budget challenges, inadequate finances to support leadership development, lack of human resources capacity and flat hierarchies that do not provide opportunities for upward mobility. (Bozer et al., 2015; Froelich et al., 2011; J. C. Santora & Sarros, 2001; Wolfred, 2008).

	Mercury	Jupiter	Saturn	Pluto	Mars	Uranus	Neptune	Venus
Budget size	R80 million	R13 million	R25 million	R4,5 million	R7,3 million	R11 million	R10 million	R5 million
Staff Size	60	20	13	15	25	17	50	11
HR Mgr	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Succession Planning Budget	Yes but not clear	R1 million over 3 years	No	No	R25 k	No	Yes but not clear	Yes but not clear

Table 3: Staff and budget size and available resources

5.2.1 Staff size and resources

The table above shows the budget size, staff complement, lack or presence of an HR manager and the budget for succession planning. Most of the NPOs listed (except for Mercury) have relatively small budgets and staff compliments. Five of the 8 NPOs indicated that there was a budget for succession planning, but only two were able to provide some information about the amounts and timeline of implementation. None of the organisations has internal HR capacity.

All the NPOs interviewed for this study had areas of uniqueness in their solutions to resource and capacity building (Santora et al., 2007). Nonetheless, on further investigation, some common approaches were revealed. The areas of commonality center around the role of policies, transparency and trust in board/ED relationships, sufficient time allowance and the appointment process.

5.2.2 Organisational Policies

None of the NPOs had a succession planning policy, yet they successfully appointed a transformative internal successor. This study, therefore, contrasts with the literature that claims that the development of operational policies is crucial for the successful implementation of succession planning (Rothwell, 2001; Estedadi et al., 2015). Instead, acknowledgement of the need for change, commitment to transparency, and willingness to support were the key factors in successful transformative transitions.

Even though all NPOs in this study successfully facilitated the appointment of a transformational internal successor without operational policies, the benefits of relevant policies around promotion, learning and development cannot be overlooked. Appropriate transformative policies can show an organisation's commitment to succession planning and staff development. Moreover, policies can provide guidance on handling issues (CIPD, 2023) for staff and board members, minimizing the influence of personal agendas on the executive recruitment process.

5.2.3 A transparent and trusting board-ED relationship

The ex-EDs of all the NPOs expressed their desire to step down and discussed possible ways to navigate the process long in advance of their actual resignation. In some cases, they only resigned once the successor was appointed to ensure a sufficient handover period. From the cases, it emerges that a leader would only undertake the risk of leadership transformation if there was a relationship of trust and transparency between the board and the executive. With trust and transparency in place, an ED has the assurance that they will not be forced out of the organization once their plan to step down is expressed. Similarly, the board is comforted by the assurance that it will have an ED who will not lose interest or neglect duties before they step down.

An additional benefit of a strong board-ED relationship that transpired from the research is the fact that, in many of the cases studied, the boards typically followed the ex-ED's lead on proposed plans and transition processes to address leadership succession. This happened even though the ED role is a board appointment. This contrasts with the literature that although the ED could have some involvement with the succession management process in a consultative role, this should be limited. Rather, the board should be actively involved with the succession planning for the executive director and senior management roles. This includes assessing potential talent, mitigating risk, holding the Executive Director accountable for implementing succession planning the development of potential successors (Smith & Conlon, 2010).

5.2.4 Sufficient time for planning succession

Whilst it was the announcement of the ex-EDs of their desire to step down that started the transition process, the findings of this study make it clear that the plans for a successful, transformational leadership transition process are often intentionally put in place years in advance to allow for capacity building of internal candidates. This contrasts with research done by Kempster (2019) that states that most organisations only start to think about succession planning at the time when the ED expresses their intention to leave the organization. Below are examples of how some of the NPOs who participated in this research put plans and structures in place, sometimes several years before the need for a new Executive director.

The ex-ED of **Mercury** announced shortly after his appointment, that he would resign within five years and hand over to a black female. He was intentional about this being an internal candidate. In his view, there were too many leadership requirements unique to the organisation that one could not explain or recruit for. The ex-ED of **Mars** had ongoing succession conversations with the board for at least 10 years before announcing her retirement. During this period, she identified individuals she believed had leadership potential and invested in their growth. When she made the announcement, the board was not surprised, but even then, they agreed on a 2-year plan. **Jupiter** started to put plans in place for succession in 2015. This was four years before the ex-ED officially resigned in 2019 and nearly seven years before she left the organisation. During those 4 years, a succession project team was created consisting of the senior management team, the ex-ED, and the board chair. The process was facilitated by an external coach and involved creating plans for critical leadership roles, providing opportunities to lead, and reassuring the team that they had the necessary institutional knowledge to lead the organisation after the ex-ED's departure.

Shortly after they became the leader of **Uranus** in 2018, the ex-ED created a skills matrix that outlined the key skills and experience required for the ED role. This was three years prior to leaving **Uranus**. The skills matrix was shared and approved by the board. She then rated each of the members of the leadership team against this skills matrix to identify potential gaps. She purposefully supported her team's development based on the gaps identified and gave them stretch opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Pluto effectively had a five-year succession planning period from when the white leader left to when the single black leader was in place. This gave the incumbent ED an invaluable opportunity to learn from his fellow leaders. The ex-ED at **Venus** started to discuss succession plans with the board about ten years before her resignation. The discussion with her board was necessitated by her burnout and the realisation that the organisation needs to build extra capacity to guarantee future sustainability. They implemented a rotational leadership model which allowed for skills and knowledge to be shared, rather than it be held by a single individual.

Neptune started succession planning about two years before the ex-ED stepped down from the leadership role. He closely collaborated with the board chair, consulted with organizations that had undergone leadership transitions, and enlisted an external HR consultant for added support.

Saturn's board knew the ex-ED was a reluctant leader. He raised succession every year during his performance appraisal. After four years, the incumbent ED was appointed, providing ample time for growth opportunities and board exposure. This made her feel prepared to take on the role.

5.2.5 The appointment process

Although Tuomala (2018) and Kempster (2019) mention recruitment processes in their writing, the literature fails to address the effect of different leadership appointment or recruitment approaches on succession planning within the non-profit sector. This section aims to contribute to the understanding of the impact of the appointment process followed by analysing the case studies to obtain knowledge about how the recruitment and appointment process took place and who the key role players were.

As illustrated in Table 4, the case studies were divided equally in terms of whether the recruitment process was competitive, with the job advertised and open to both internal and external candidates, or whether the internal candidate was offered the opportunity to become the leader of the organization without the need to go through a competitive recruitment process. The reasons are given in the table below:

Organisation	Competitive	Direct	Comment/Reason
Jupiter		x	Had a track record of internal succession.
Mars	x		The board wanted to best person for the role.
Mercury	x		Wanted to ensure transparency.
Neptune		x	Faith based organisation, had to be convinced of commitment to faith.
Pluto		x	Could not afford market related salary or to pay a recruitment fee.
Saturn		x	They tried previously, did not work. The ex -ED believed the incumbent ED would have been the strongest, even if they advertised.
Uranus	x		Internal legitimacy given lack of senior programmes experience.

Venus	x		To ensure internal credibility.

Table 4: Type of recruitment process followed and reason for doing so

A closer examination of the four cases where there was no external recruitment process, revealed that three of the incumbent executive directors attended board meetings, which led to strong relationships with the board members. These relationships were instrumental in fostering confidence within the candidates and directly resulted in their agreement to take the leadership positions.

However, in the case of Jupiter, the incumbent ED did not have the same exposure to board meetings and, therefore, an opportunity to build a relationship with the board members and demonstrate her expertise. Despite her confidence in her successor's skills and experience, it was a difficult challenge for the ex-ED to convince the board to appoint her successor. Another factor that compounded the appointment was the fact that the incumbent ED's peers were not convinced that she could step up into the leadership role.

The incumbent EDs of Uranus and Pluto also had to overcome credibility challenges from their peers. However, as the top-performing candidates who were appointed through a competitive process, their success validated their abilities and helped them to overcome impostor syndrome as they earned the trust of the board. Similarly, when the incumbent ED of Mars was appointed through an external recruitment process, it gave her the confidence to lead as she was initially convinced that the board would appoint another white person.

It therefore emerges that a strong relationship between the board and the potential successor, and peers that have demonstrated faith in the candidate's leadership abilities, a competitive recruitment process, facilitated by an external, objective professional recruitment process, should be utilised. This ensures a fair and transparent process, especially in cases with more than one internal applicant. Furthermore, it gives the successor the confidence that they were recruited on merit and with the support of the board, which will give them the validation and internal credibility they need to step up into the leadership role.

5.3 Enablers for succession planning for leadership transformation

As noted in the literature, to achieve leadership transformation, succession planning with an integrated focus on diversity is critically important to the identification, development and promotion of individuals from previously disadvantaged groups. (González, 2010; Greer & Virick, 2008).

In the below section, key factors uncovered in this research that enable succession planning for leadership transformation are discussed.

5.3.1 Commitment of the executive director and board

The findings from the positive deviance sample from the research challenge the view shared by Thomas (2002) that there is a general lack of leadership commitment to the advancement of black people in South African organisations. It concurs with that of Friedman (2017) and Kilian et al. (2005) that the organisations which have successfully developed diverse leadership talent had an executive leader who was directly involved with the transformational succession process. The ex-EDs played a critically important role in building a diverse workforce and driving succession planning. They pro-actively recruited for diversity, created development opportunities, mentored the potential successor, initiated the succession planning conversation with the board, researched best practices for succession, engaged external advisors and led the transition process.

It is also worth noting that none of the leaders of the case study NPOs were forced to resign or dismissed from the ED role. Rather, they resigned due to the conviction that, as a white person, they could not continue in the leadership role in their respective NPOs or due to a major change in their life circumstances. Furthermore, two ex-EDs expressed their interest in continuing to work for the organisation but not in the ED capacity. They took this step despite the risk that they could be "kicked out" if the board did not agree to keep them in an alternative role.
They brought up the topic of leadership transformation regardless of the potential risk.

In contradiction with the literature and even though the ED role is a board appointment, the level of the board's commitment to leadership transformation and racial diversity did not impact the outcome (Berthoud & Greene, 2001; Greer & Virick, 2008; A. Thomas, 2002). The participant NPOs achieved leadership transformation, although appointing a black person was not the board's most important consideration. Furthermore, based on this research, the racial diversity of the board did not influence leadership transformation. This contradicts the view of Bell et al. (2006), who claim that if a board is predominantly white, leadership transformation might be more challenging to attain. Of the eight boards of the participant NPOs, only two had white trustees in the minority. The rest had a 50/50 split between white and Black/Indian/Coloured trustees, or the majority were white.

This point is underlined by the fact that in some cases, such as Mars and Uranus, the former EDs believed that the boards were only concerned with appointing the best person for the role, rather than focusing on leadership transformation. In fact, at Jupiter, the board had to be convinced to appoint the internal Indian successor. According to the ex-ED of Pluto, the board initially wanted to appoint a white internal successor, but he refused

and convinced them to appoint the racially diverse leadership team as he had ethical objections to Pluto again being led by a white person.

It is, therefore, clear that the ED plays a crucial role, and in the cases that formed the study, an even more critical role than the board in driving succession planning for leadership transformation and guiding the boards accordingly to achieve this outcome.

5.3.2 Relationship between the executive director and successor

According to this study, the role of the ex-ED and the relationship between the ex-ED and the incumbent ED emerged as critically important for the enablement of succession planning for leadership transformation.

My findings concur with the literature that it is critical for a leader of an organisation to build trust if they want to create an inclusive organisation with a commitment to diversity. (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Florea et al., 2013). Furthermore, based on this research, it is not sufficient for a leader to earn the trust of their subordinates. A reciprocal trusting relationship needs to exist between the Executive Director (ex-ED) and the potential successor (incumbent ED) to foster growth and development. In the participant case studies, trust was built by the ex-ED's willingness and ability to listen, consult, and reflect on the input of their subordinates. According to the incumbent ED of Pluto, the fact that his leader listened to his ideas and showed a willingness to implement the ideas of the senior management team significantly improved his confidence to eventually lead the organization.

With a trusting relationship as described above, the ex-Ed is more likely to allow robust discussion to resolve a difference of opinion and subordinates are also more confident to raise contradictory opinions without the fear of a relationship breakdown or other negative consequences.

This is illustrated by the incumbent ED of Uranus, who admitted that she often pushed back on strategic plans proposed by the ex-ED but that she eventually accepted her decision as there was trust in the ex-ED and the knowledge that she had the organisation's best interest at heart. Encouragement to share views fostered confidence and ability in potential successors. Moreover, reciprocal trust allowed the ex-ED to take risks that allowed the incumbent ED opportunities to represent the organization at strategically important external meetings. For example, the incumbent ED of Venus represented the organisation in parliament. He shared how this experience, combined with the freedom to make mistakes, prepared him for leadership. The incumbent EDs of Mercury and Saturn were asked to hold relationships with key government partners and attend meetings where critical decisions were made. On the other hand, the incumbent EDs trusted that their leaders would support and guide them in their preparation for these events and did not want them to fail.

In addition to a relationship of trust, the ex-EDs championed the incumbent ED. They saw the potential and had a firm belief in their abilities. In the case of Jupiter, the ex-ED had to convince the board and the management team that the incumbent ED was suitable for the role. She did not hesitate and reassured the incumbent ED that she would always support her as she had faith in her ability to do the role. The ex-ED of Uranus was impressed with the incumbent ED from the moment she joined the organisation and championed her in the various roles she held. At Saturn, the ex-ED treated the incumbent ED as an equal from when she joined the organisation. Their relationship of mutual respect and her concern for the ex-ED's health were motivating factors for the incumbent ED to accept the leadership role. He, on the other hand, was convinced that there was no point in an external recruitment exercise as he believed the incumbent ED would be the strongest candidate even with external competition. Although the ED role was a board appointment, the ex-ED at Mercury ensured that the technical exercises the candidates had to prepare for the interview, played to the strengths of the incumbent ED. At Neptune, the ex-ED asked the incumbent ED to step up into the leadership role. The ex-ED at Venus asked the incumbent ED whether he would apply for the role even before sharing her intention to leave with the board.

5.3.3 Mentoring

The findings of this study concur with the literature that states that mentoring supports succession management for the transformation of organisations (Greer & Virick, 2008), supports the development of skills and confidence (Oosthuizen et al., 2019; Reynolds, 2011) and has a positive impact on the career progression of upcoming black leaders (April, 2012; James, 2008; Kilian et al., 2005).

Organisation	Ex-ED provided mentoring?	External mentor	Race a consideration?	Comments
Jupiter	Yes	Yes	No	Had longstanding relationships.
				Different mentors for different issues.
Neptune	Yes	Yes	No	Only skills set of the mentor mattered.
				She purposively searches for racial diversity in all spheres of her life
				After a few months, these turned into reciprocal mentoring sessions
				It allowed her an opportunity to ask critical questions without being judged.
Pluto	Yes	Yes	No	Having mentors of different races with different perspectives allowed him to learn where people come from and for new ideas to flourish
Mercury	Yes	Yes	Yes	Had a huge impact on her growth.

				Her mentor was part of the reason why she had the confidence to apply for the ED role.
Venus	Yes	Yes	No	He did not feel that race made any difference to the quality of the support or their relationship.
Mars	Yes	No	No	She highly rates the ex-ED's leadership style and appreciated their mentoring relationship
				There was nothing clearly defined as a mentor but she automatically took the ex-ED as her mentor when she joined.
Saturn	Yes	Yes	No	She also knew that she could go to any of the board members if she needed to engage on a topic or needed guidance.
Uranus	Yes	No	N/a	Tried to find external mentors but it was not lasting relationships.
				The ex-ED took her mentoring relationship very seriously.

Table 5: Mentoring received per case study and the nature thereof

As shown in Table 5, nearly all the incumbent EDs received mentoring prior to their ED appointment. However, contrary to what the literature suggests, this study did not find that having a mentor of the same race as the mentee was a particular consideration for all participants (Myeza & April, 2021) or that they found cross-race mentoring relationships challenging (Thomas, 2001). The main factor for the mentee was the skills and experience of the mentor. Moreover, the incumbent ED of Neptune shared that she actively searched for racial diversity in her mentor relationships as she strived for diversity in all spheres of her life. Similarly, the incumbent ED of Pluto has had many mentors over the years, of which only one was African-Black like him. His experience was that having mentors of different races gave him an opportunity to learn different perspectives and for new ideas to flourish.

Most mentoring relationships in the study formed naturally, which, according to Killian et al. (2005), is ideal as it has a greater level of commitment than a formal mentorship programme. However, the incumbent ED of Mercury participated in a formal mentorship programme and was matched with an experienced ED based on her requirements. She was new to the NPO sector when she joined Mercury and, therefore, did not have access to potential mentors. This correlates with Killian et al. (2005) that in these circumstances, formal mentorship

programmes could be a good option. In contrast with the other research participants, having an African-black woman as a mentor was a critical requirement for her. She believes that because they were the same race and gender, the impact on the quality of their relationships and the growth she experienced because of the mentoring was significantly increased.

It is clear from the research that external mentors play a valuable role in the development of potential black leaders. However, the incumbent EDs of Uranus, Saturn and Mars did not have external mentors, but they experienced their line managers (the ex-ED) as their mentors. Although the literature recognises that a supervisor of a Black employee could play the role of a mentor (Killian et al., 2005), I argue that the mentoring nature of the relationship between the ED and the potential successor is more significant than stated in the literature. All of the incumbent EDs in the participant case studies emphasised the value of the mentoring relationship they had with their EDs, whether they had an external mentor or not. In some cases, such as Jupiter and Saturn the mentoring became reciprocal as their relationship strengthened. For example, the ex-ED of Jupiter mentored his successor on leadership and she mentored him on community engagement. The knowledge that their leader required their guidance and reflected on the advice they gave, further supported the growth of the incumbent EDs.

5.3.4 Coaching

All the incumbent EDs received coaching once they stepped into the ED role. However, it was outside of the scope of this study to explore the effectiveness of coaching for new leaders of colour in NPOs and whether it provides the required operational and emotional support as stated by Tuomala (2018).

Only the incumbent ED of Mercury received paid-for coaching before their ED appointment. In Mercury's case, coaching for the senior management teams was a standard practice encouraged and funded by one of their core funders. The incumbent ED of Uranus participated in a free coaching programme before applying for the ED role. The programme was focused on supporting black women in leadership positions across various sectors. Although she found the coaching helpful, she felt it was limited in addressing her specific needs, most probably because it was a free programme.

It is worth noting that Mercury, the only NPO that provided paid-for coaching for their senior leaders, is also the one with the biggest budget with a core funder on the board. Coaching is expensive and most likely unaffordable for most NPOs. Moreover, the incumbent ED of Mars mentioned that she had to stop the coaching she received after her appointment as the organisation could no longer afford it. The researcher therefore argues that affordability might be one of the reasons why not much research exists on the effectiveness of coaching in NPOs (Katz, 2021).

5.3.5 Learning and Development

The findings of this study concur with Ngcamu and Tefarra (2018) that leadership development can successfully be applied to achieve the transformation agenda.

Organisation	L&D Policy	Budget	How?	Informal/ No-cost	Attended board meetings	Examples of informal/ no-cost L&D	Detail/Impact
Jupiter	No	Yes	Organisational and personal development was integral to the organisation.	Yes	No, but were transparent with staff representation.	Structured bi-annual performance management processes and regular supervisory meetings with line managers informed staff development.	Was encouraged and supported to learn and develop, from the volunteers to the board.
			Embedded culture that supports the creation of strong, independent women.			Whenever a manager went on leave, one of the team members would occupy that role.	Everyone was expected to be "developing all the time."
			Strive to be a learning organisation and set aside an annual training and development budget			Normal practice for junior staff to join senior management at meetings with external funders and partners.	By the time the Deputy Director took over as ED, she had already established relationships with key funders and partners.
			L&D was a priority				
Mars	Yes	Yes	Organisational culture of supporting staff development, backed by policy and budget.	Yes	No	Implemented informal training sessions and learning lunches to share her knowledge and experience with anyone on the staff who were interested.	Some of the cleaners doing a course in Early Childhood Development so that they could better understand the service Mars provides.
			Ex-ED consciously gave a wider group of people opportunities to learn different skills.			Had sessions on "how to create a budget, to writing a proposal, to conceptualising a project".	
Mercury	No	Yes	Incumbent ED's development was purposely designed and encouraged to	Yes	Yes	His approach was to make each member of his senior management team responsible for an	Supported the current ED's growth in confidence and contribute to

			gain the skills required for the Executive Director role.			area of work and hold them accountable for delivery.	Mercury's strategy development, as she she had the first-hand exposure to back up her opinions.
			View was that off-the-shelf training was too generic and therefore not helpful.			Was the acting Executive Director for three months whilst the ex-ED was working on a different project during the COVID-lockdown.	It gave the individuals the opportunity to learn how to present to partners, write funding proposals, build relationships with funders, develop sophisticated presentations and build credibility within the international academic network in their sector
Neptune	No	Yes	Pluto had a culture of developing staff and providing psycho-social support.	Yes	Yes	They each managed a different piece of the leadership portfolio based on the individual's skills and expertise.	5 year transition period with joint leadership team
			It was "the heartbeat of the organisation was about development and growth".			2 years before the ex-ED left, the three senior managers participated in board meetings, took turns attending government funder meetings, and were very involved in programme design and the costing.	An external organisation assisted them in creating "learning circles" in which anyone could give feedback on organisational or programmatic issues without fear of retribution.
			Would fundraise for training , even when budgets were tight.				It is evident how successful this was by the number of young people employed by Pluto and who have since moved into leadership positions.
							The founder of Pluto invested in establishing it as a learning organisation from the start.
Pluto	No	Yes	Pluto had a culture of developing staff and providing	Yes	Yes	They each managed a different piece of the leadership portfolio based on the	5 year transition period with joint leadership team

			psycho-social support.			individual's skills and expertise.	
			It was "the heartbeat of the organisation was about development and growth".			2 years before the ex-ED left, the three senior managers participated in board meetings, took turns attending government funder meetings, and were very involved in programme design and the costing.	It is evident how successful this was by the number of young people employed by Pluto and who have since moved into leadership positions.
			Would fundraise for training, even when budgets were tight.				The founder of Pluto invested in establishing it as a learning organisation from the start.
							An external organisation assisted them in creating "learning circles" in which anyone could give feedback on organisational or programmatic issues without fear of retribution.
Saturn	Yes	Yes	Always knew it was available if required.	Yes	Yes	The ex-ED believed "it was really important to give them lots of responsibility and lots of support."	The current ED had complete autonomy over her portfolio of work. The ex-ED trusted the choices she made, not just on the technical side but also with partners and donors.
						He increased their scope of work and budget, allowed them to make strategically important decisions, represent the organisation externally and build relationships with partners and donors.	
						Staff had the freedom to "do what they felt they needed to do to deliver on the organisation's goal, rather than what I thought they needed to."	
						The team had a culture of peer	

						learning, especially between the ex-ED and current ED, who worked very closely with each other	
						She held the most critical external relationships and would often externally represent the organisation independently.	
Uranus	Yes	Yes	Had a study policy. R8 000 /person allocated for training.	Yes	Yes	Attended board meetings to present their portfolio.	Promoted from Programmes Officer to fundraising manager.
			Both the current and ex-ED did a PG Dip funded by Uranus.			Provided growth projects which the individual led.	Had exposure the more strategic fundraising by the time she stepped into the ED role.
						Promoted to Fundraising Officer without any fundraising experience.	
						Asked to take on Operations responsibilities when ex-ED went on maternity leave. Also had to compile board packs and attend full board meetings.	
Venus	Yes	Yes	Had a transparent staff development policy and invested heavily in the development of their team.	Yes	Yes	All staff participated in a quarterly reflective process where they could inform the strategic thinking about the programmes or other internal systems.	There was a very high take up of these development opportunities for personal growth. For example, two employees who started as kitchen aids completed various diplomas and progressed to programmatic roles.
			They discussed the individual's development plan at the performance appraisal at the end of each year.			Staff co-designed the monitoring and evaluation system.	Venus funded the degrees and post-graduate qualifications of both executive directors.
			Anyone could request increased funding if they			Attended funder meetings during the two years before she	They had good staff retention as

			required it for work-related training.			left Venus. Often represented Venus at conferences, in Parliament, and national government department meetings	the staff felt they were growing.

Table 6: Learning and Development policy, budget and opportunities and their impact

However, in contrast with Santora et al. (2007), the lack of budget or human resources departments to drive learning and development did not prevent leadership development initiatives.

As is clear from Table 6, in the cases analysed for the study, staff development was not only a priority for the development of potential leaders, but it was integral to their organisational culture. According to the ex-ED of Pluto, their organisational purpose was not only about supporting the growth and development of the programme participants but also about capacitating staff to step into leadership positions. At Jupiter, organisational and personal development was at the heart of their programme to support the creation of strong, independent women. Neptune stopped their international volunteering to create development opportunities for their local staff. The ex-ED ensured that the organisational culture of supporting staff development was backed by policy and budget.

Even if they did not have a formal policy, as was the case with 70% of the participant NPOs, or had tight budgets, they opted to fundraise to make it possible for an employee to attend the training they required. Examples were shared during the research of staff attaining their driver's license, kitchen staff who qualified in human resources, cleaning staff doing a course in early childhood development and in the case of Pluto, staff that were developed internally who moved into leadership positions with other NPOs.

However, although these organisations spent on training and development, this is not what had the most impact on leadership development. Rather, it was, as stated by James (2008), the numerous informal opportunities, events, and exposures they had rather than a formal leadership development programme. Informal learning lunches, which covered topics such as creating a budget, writing proposals, or conceptualising a project or one-to-ones focused on improving report writing skills. Many incumbent EDs were attending and presenting at the board meetings, long before they were appointed as the ED. This gave them an excellent opportunity to establish strategically important relationships and contribute to the direction of the organisation. In several of the cases, there were acting-up opportunities when the ex-ED went on maternity leave, took a sabbatical or was on extended sick leave. There were opportunities to attend funder meetings, establish these critically important relationships, and co-design systems such as monitoring and evaluation. Some participants mentioned "growth projects" for

which they were given the budget and held accountable. Importantly, they knew they were allowed to fail, and that the executive director would provide them with support and guidance should they need it.

Based on the examples mentioned, neither formal paid-for training or informal training were found to be sufficient for leadership development. Rather, it is critical to provide development opportunities and support and then be willing to share power and give potential successors the exposure to put their learning into practice.

5.3.6 Support network

According to the literature, a strong network that provides potential leaders with access to resources and people of influence is a key factor in the career advancement of people of colour (Thomas, 2001; Gothard & Austin, 2013). The findings agree with the idea of a network. A network was a common factor in all the participant cases, however, the nuance of having a support network rather than a network of influence or strategic importance emerged.

Organisation	Yes/No	Played a part in the decision to take the role?	Comment
Jupiter	Yes	Yes	A longstanding network of friends in related professional fields provided support and mentoring
			Husband and children supported the decision
Mars	Yes	Yes	Her mother's encouragement and guidance was particularly invaluable when she considered whether to apply for the ED role at Mars, as she knows the sector well and has supported the current ED's career progression throughout.
			Built over 30 years, personal and professional. That is how she got the job with Mars in the first instance.
Mercury	Yes	Yes	Network of technical experts and personal.
			They encouraged her to apply when she doubted herself.
Neptune	Yes	No	No but have been critical support since she started
Pluto	Yes	Yes	These relationships supported him when he doubted his ability to take up the leadership role without the support of his colleagues. His networks gave him the validation he needed.
Saturn	Yes	Yes	They were an excellent soundboard and provided encouragement and motivation to take the opportunity.
			Current board members, previous colleagues, professionals in the same sector, and academics
Uranus	No	No	The Ex-ED and the Chair
Venus	No	No	His network consisted of people with different skills and knowledge who worked at various levels but grappled with many of the same challenges and frustrations.

			Their support model was like a "lemniscate", continuously giving and receiving and was invaluable to him.
			Support network strongly encouraged him to apply.

Table 7: Existence of a support network and its role in the decision to apply for the ED role

The composition of the support networks varied and included a combination of personal, family and professional relationships built over time. In line with the literature, these relationships exhibited high levels of trust and loyalty (Kanter, 1977). For six of the eight incumbent EDs, the guidance and encouragement of their support network were critical in their decision to apply and accept the ED role. Although this was not the case for Neptune's incumbent ED, she emphasised what an important role they have played since she became ED. Similarly, the ED of Uranus admitted that she did not realise beforehand the importance of having a support network once she stepped into the leadership role. Since then, she has been actively building her support network of other black women in leadership roles.

5.4 The incumbent

This research aimed to explore the organisational factors which enable succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs. However, I believe that it would be a disservice to the research and the leaders of these organisations not to recognise the impact of their life experiences on their motivation and preparation for stepping up into the leadership role of an NPO. This concurs with Myeza and April (2021) that upbringing has a significant impact on "the chosen paths for aspiring black leaders". As illustrated

Most of the incumbent EDs were brought up in Apartheid South Africa which as a black person meant limited or no access to good quality schooling and tertiary education. Some of the participants grew up in townships, and therefore, even if they were born after 1994 and had access, may have faced affordability issues. While personal career development played a role in motivating the incumbent EDs, their main driving force for stepping up into the ED role was their belief in the importance of their respective NPOs' missions and their passion for them. Although this might seem like an obvious factor for leaders of NPOs, it is still an inspiring quality that should not be taken for granted.

The incumbent EDs in this study overcame many systemic challenges that their white colleagues did not encounter. These experiences and challenges moulded them into the people they are today. They were fortunate enough to join NPOs led by people who backed their growth and development, shared their power, and provided them with

opportunities to take risks. These experiences allowed them to grow and thrive in their roles and ultimately become the executive directors of the organisations whose mission they were deeply committed to.

5.5 Theoretical framework

The diagram below presents the framework for succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs based on the findings of this study. The key pillars of the framework are the individual, the NPO, the enabler and the process.

As depicted in the diagram and discussed in the previous section, the individual's life experiences, internal motivation and passion for the cause of the NPO are critically important factors. Furthermore, having a support network, whether professional or personal, with whom they can discuss challenges and get guidance can play an important role in their career progression.

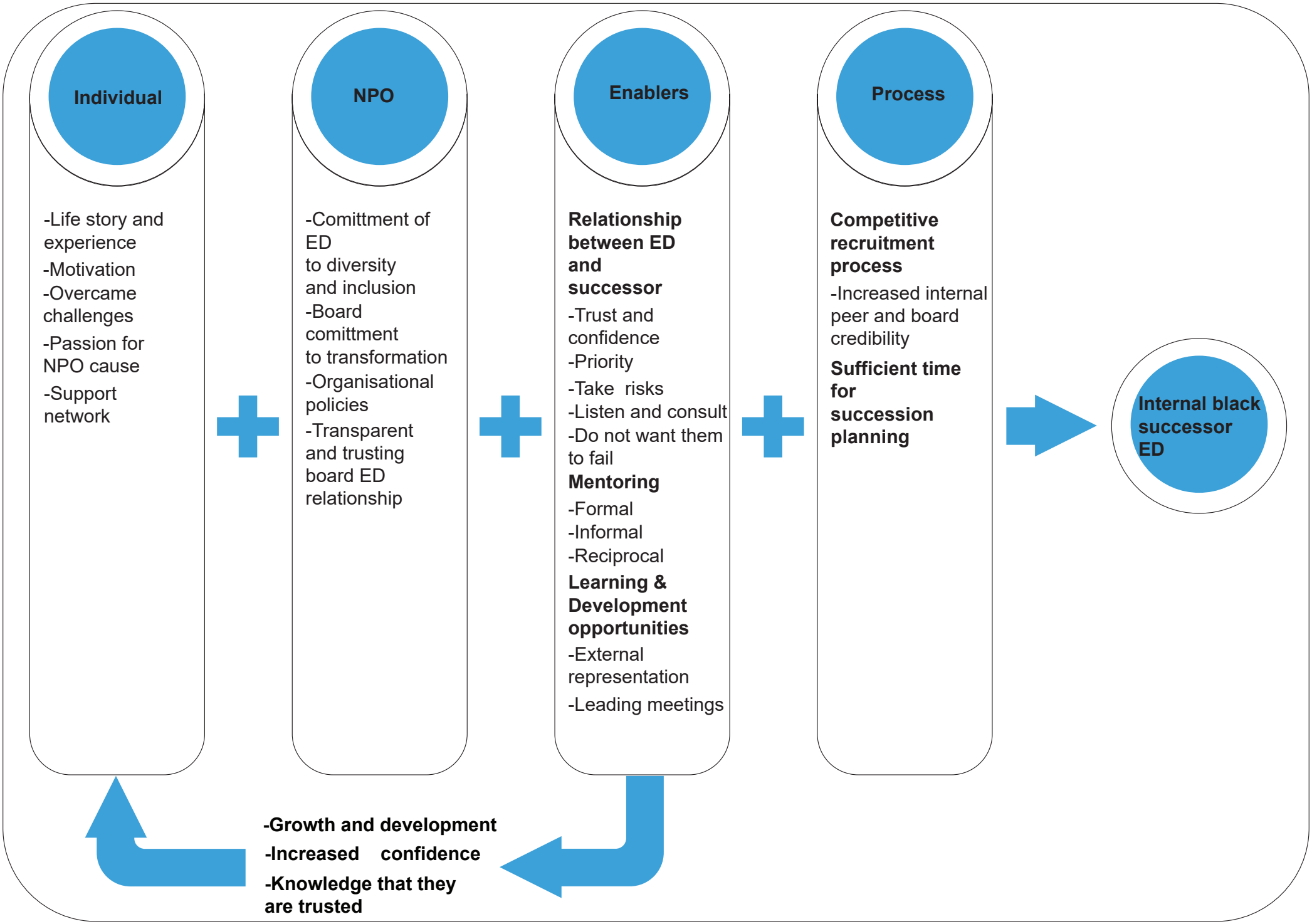
At the organisational level, there needs to be an intentional drive to increase diversity and a commitment to create an inclusive NPO. A transparent and trusting relationship between the board and the ED also supports transformation and succession planning readiness. Although few of the case study NPOs had sufficient organisational policies, as discussed in section 5.2.2, the researcher believes that having relevant policies will support succession planning and ensure a smoother leadership transformation.

If the individual and NPO, with the qualities described above, are in place, it creates a suitable environment for the enablers to take place and be effective. Enablers such as the relationship between the ED and successor, mentoring and informal learning and development opportunities, lead to the individual's growth in skills, experience and confidence that they could be successful in an ED role.

The fourth pillar emphasises the importance of the processes that are followed to enable leadership transformation and internal succession. As discussed in section 5.2.4, allowing sufficient time for the succession planning process is critical. Adherence to a competitive recruitment process is also essential as it leads to increased peer and board credibility for the successor ED once in their new role.

The framework illustrates the importance of each element independently but also highlights the significance of their interconnectedness to successfully achieve succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs.

Framework for succession planning for leadership transformation in South African NPOs



6. Research Conclusion

This study aimed to address the gap in the current literature by exploring the ways in which South African non-profit organisations could achieve succession planning for leadership transformation.

As demonstrated by the literature, NPOs play an essential role in transforming South African society and providing critical services to the most vulnerable. It is, therefore, crucial for an NPO to have an executive director represent the communities it serves. Having an internal successor in the executive director position who has the required understanding and expertise of the NPO's services significantly contributes to the effective delivery and sustainability of the organisation.

The study highlights how nuanced the dynamics of succession planning for leadership transformation within South African NPOs are. It emphasises the significance of personal conviction, intentional efforts, and inclusive organisational cultures as driving forces for meaningful change.

Of the eight NPOs examined for this study, only one had a substantial budget, and none had internal HR capacity. This strongly suggests that even NPOs with limited resources can navigate effective succession planning for leadership transformation. Critical factors that can bring about effective succession are board-ED relationships built on trust and transparency, sufficient time allowance to plan for the transition process, and careful consideration of appointment support and processes. The predominant absence of formal policies in the NPOs examined for this study challenges existing literature. Instead, this study emphasises the importance of an acknowledgement of the need for change and a subsequent commitment to foster transparency for successful transformative transitions.

The research findings give valuable insights into the enablers of succession planning for leadership transformation. It sheds light on the importance of NPOs as organisations that are intentional about driving diversity and inclusion. It also highlights the critical role of relationships between the ED and the board and between the ED and their senior management team.

Mentoring support also proved to support the black successor development. Mentor relationships should ideally be developed informally as this proved valuable for the development of potential black leader successors. Furthermore, a reciprocal mentoring relationship between the ED and the potential successor is especially

valuable to support the growth of the latter. The study also shows that potential successors who are given informal leadership development opportunities, combined with occasions to put learning into practice, were much more effective during internal successor development. Access to a support network (whether family, friends or external colleagues) where the potential successor could discuss professional challenges also proved critical. Such a support network continued to be important for the incumbent ED once in the role.

The findings in this study could inform the development and implementation of a practical programme that supports NPOs to overcome barriers during succession planning. The programme could include developing a mentoring support programme and creating informal leadership development opportunities to support senior and executive NPO managers.

This research makes a significant contribution to the literature on leadership transformation and succession planning in South African NPOs. However, the researcher is confident that its findings can also be transferred to small and medium-sized enterprises in the private sector that struggle with similar resource challenges. The findings could be implemented to support an increase in equity and transformation in workplaces. The researcher believes that the culmination of this research goes beyond the academic realm. It aspires to be a catalyst for change that offers actionable insights. Subsequently, these insights can be translated into initiatives that support the growth and sustainability of NPOs. In this way, the research contributes to the broader, ongoing goal of building resilient, transformed organisations that are more effective in the way they navigate the many complex challenges South African society faces.

7. Future Research

Leadership transitions within organisations are critical junctures that can shape the trajectory of an institution. In South African NPOs, the appointment of an internal black leader marks a significant step toward fostering diversity and inclusivity.

However, the dynamics of leadership transitions, particularly within the first year or two, remain understudied. This study argues that further empirical research should concentrate on this crucial period. The study on founder successions in American NPOs by Tuomala et al. (2018) raised some relevant points. However, their research does not include the crucial elements of the internal successor or racial transformation.

Delving into the main challenges faced by the new leader, especially concerning their relationship with their previous peers and building a network of fellow executive directors and funders. The study should also examine the timing and nature of the transition from the previous leader to provide the new leader with the best possible chance for success. Furthermore, considerations for budget allocation for the handover process should be explored.

It was clear from this study that this transition is not without challenges, particularly when the new leader was formerly a peer among their colleagues. This shift in dynamics can lead to various hurdles, such as resentment, scepticism, and resistance from colleagues who may find it difficult to adjust to the changed power dynamics. One of the incumbent EDs raised the challenge of her previous peers expecting her to accept some poor-performing behaviour from them as a black leader as “she was one of them”.

The new leader may face a trust deficit, as colleagues may question their competence and suitability for the role. This scepticism can hinder effective collaboration and communication within the team, affecting overall productivity and morale. Addressing these trust issues is paramount for the new leader to establish a positive working relationship with their peers. Furthermore, the new leader may encounter challenges in navigating relationships with former peers who may have aspired to the leadership position, as was the case at Uranus. This potential competition can create tension and disrupt the collaborative spirit essential for effective teamwork.

The timing and nature of the transition or handover from the previous leader play a pivotal role in shaping the new leader's initial experiences. Research should investigate the optimal time for the handover to ensure a smooth

transition and minimise disruptions within the organization. Research based on founder succession in America, suggests that the previous executive director (the founder in this case) should stay involved with the NPO for an extended period (Tuomala et al., 2018). However, it might not be an affordable option for many South African NPOs.

Ideally, a well-structured transition plan should be in place, allowing for a gradual transfer of responsibilities and knowledge from the outgoing leader to the successor. A phased approach enables the new leader to familiarise themselves with the organisation's intricacies, understand existing challenges, and establish relationships with key stakeholders and funders.

Additionally, clear communication about the transition plan is crucial. Both the outgoing and incoming leaders should openly communicate with the team about the leadership change, emphasising continuity, and highlighting the shared vision for the organisation's future. This can help alleviate uncertainties and foster a positive attitude toward the new leadership.

Allocating a budget for the leadership handover process could be essential to ensure its effectiveness. Resources should be allocated for activities such as leadership training and development programs for the new leader, coaching, and team-building initiatives to strengthen relationships within the organisation. As mentioned in the discussion chapter of this study, investing in professional coaching or mentoring services can be beneficial for the new leader, providing them with external perspectives and guidance.

In conclusion, the first year after the appointment of an internal black leader in a South African non-profit organisation is a critical period that warrants further empirical research.

References

Abzug, R., & Galaskiewicz, J. (2001). Nonprofit boards: Crucibles of expertise or symbols of local identities? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *30*(1), 51–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764001301003

Adams, T. (2005). *Founder transitions: creating good endings and new beginnings. A guide for executive directors and boards.* https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-FounderTransitions-2005-Full.pdf

Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S. W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review*, *27*(1), 17–40. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2002.5922314

Ahmad, R. (2018). The influence of transformational leadership characteristics on succession planning programs in the Malaysian public sector. *UUM Journal of Legal Studies*. (9)7, 39-56.

Ajjawi, R., & Higgs, J. (2015). Using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate how experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. *The Qualitative Report*, *12*(4), 612–638. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1616

April KA (2006). Ways of Looking at Reality. In April, K. and Shockley, M. (eds.), Diversity: New Realities in a Changing World. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 9-13.

April, K. (2012). Diversity management in South Africa: Inclusion, identity, intention, power and expectations. *African Journal of Business Management*, *6*(4), 1749–1759. https://doi.org/10.5897/ajbm11.1184

Apuke, O. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods : A synopsis approach. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, *6*(11), 40–47. https://doi.org/10.12816/0040336

Arya, B., & Bassi, B. (2011). Corporate social responsibility and broad-based black economic empowerment legislation in South Africa: Codes of good practice. *Business and Society*, *50*(4), 674–695. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650309332261

Austin, M. J., Regan, K., Samples, M. W., Schwartz, S. L., & Carnochan, S. (2011). Building managerial and organisational capacity in nonprofit human service organisations through a

leadership development program. *Administration in Social Work*, *35*(3), 258–281. https://doi.org/10.1080/03643107.2011.575339

Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: Deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *18*(4), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-18-00035

Bailey, J. (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: Transcribing. *Family Practice*, *25*(2), 127–131. https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmn003

Ballard, R., Habib, A., Valodia, I., & Zuern, E. (2005). Globalization, marginalization and contemporary social movements in South Africa. *African Affairs*, *104*(417), 615–634. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adi069

Baškarada, S., & Koronios, A. (2018). A philosophical discussion of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research in social science. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *18*(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00042

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *14*(4), 544–559. https://doi.org/10.1039/c6dt02264b

Bell, J., Moyers, R., & Wolfred, T. (2006). Daring to Lead 2006. In *Leadership*. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.compasspoint.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2F194_daringtolead06final.pdf&clen=550052&chunk=true

Beltran-Martin, I., & Bou-Llusar, J.C. (2018). Examining the intermediate role of employee abilities, motivation and opportunities to participate in the relationship between HR bundles and employee performance. *Business Research Quarterly*, 21(2), 99–110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brq.2018.02.001

Bennis, Warren. G., & Thomas, Robert. J. (2002). Geeks and geezers: How era, values, and defining moments shape leaders - How tough times shape good leaders. *Harvard Business Review*, *23*(9), 6–11. http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/3108.html#8

Bernstein, R., & Fredette, C. (2019). *The impact of Leadership Diversity among nonprofit organisations*.

Berthoud, H., & Greene, R. D. (2001). A multi-faceted look at diversity: Why outreach is not enough. *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, *32092*(804), 23294–23346. https://sakai.unc.edu/access/content/group/2b103f56-3eca-4aa5-b36e-494fd0956561/Class

Readings and Materials/Class 6 - Recruiting _ Hiring Staff/Readings/A_Multi-Faceted_Look_at_Diversity.pdf

Bhatti, S. H., Ramsha. Z., Vrontis, D., Santoro, G., Christofi, M. (2021). High-performance work systems, innovation and knowledge sharing. An empirical analysis in the context of project-based organizations. *Employee Relations*, (43)2, 438 – 458. https://www.emerald.com/insight/0142-5455.htm

Bhopal, K. (2020). Success against the odds: the effect of mentoring on the careers of senior black and minority ethnic academics in the UK. *British Journal of Educational Studies*. (68)1,79 -95.

Booysen, L. (2007). Barriers to employment equity implementation and retention of blacks in management in South Africa. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, *31*(1), 47–71.

Boris, E. T., & Steuerle, C. E. (2006). Scope and dimension of the nonprofit sector. In G. Sonnevi, R. Lesser, & R. Warren (Eds.), *The Non-Profit Sector: A Research Handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 66–88). Yale University Press.

Bourne, K. (2009). The inclusion breakthrough: Unleashing the real power of diversity. In C. Harvey & J. Allard (Eds.), *Understanding and managing diversity* (4th ed., pp. 263–270). Prentice Hall.

Bozer, G., Kuna, S., & Santora, J. C. (2015). The Role of leadership development in enhancing succession planning in the Israeli nonprofit sector. *Human Service Organisations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 39(5), 492–508. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2015.1077180

Bradshaw, P., & Fredette, C. (2013). Determinants of the range of ethnocultural diversity on nonprofit boards: A study of large Canadian nonprofit organisations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *42*(6), 1111–1133. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012453085

Brass, D. J. (1985). Men's and women's networks: A study of interaction patterns and influence in an organisation. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *28*(2), 327–343.

Brimhall, K. C. (2019). Inclusion and commitment as key pathways between leadership and nonprofit performance. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *30*(1), 31–49. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21368

Bryson, J. M. (2018). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organisations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organisational achievement*. John Wiley & Sons.

Burger, R., Jafta, R., & von Fintel, D. (2016). *Working Paper 2016 / 66 Affirmative action policies and the evolution of post- apartheid South Africa 's racial wage gap* (Issue November 2019). https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2016/109-3

Byrne, J., & Humble, Á. M. (2007). An introduction to mixed method research. *Atlantic Research Centre for Family-Work Issues*, *December*(January 2006), 1–4. http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/MixedMethodologyHandout.pdf

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods.* (5th Edition). Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Claeye, F., & Jackson, T. (2012). The iron cage re-revisted: Institutional isomorphism in non-profit organisations in South Africa. *Journal of International Development*, *24*, 602–622. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.2852

CIPD. (2023 July 14) *HR Policies*. CIPD. https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/hr-policies-factsheet/#three

Colvin, J. and Ashman, M. (2010) Roles, risks, and benefits of peer mentoring relationships in higher education, *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18 (2), 121–134. doi:10.1080/13611261003678879

Creswell. J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2017) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (4th Edition). Sage, Newbury Park.

Crooks, D. L. (2001). The importance of symbolic interaction in grounded theory research on women's health. *Health Care for Woman International*, *22*(1–2), 11–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/073993301300003054

Dabos, G. E., & Rousseau, D. M. (2013). Psychological contracts and informal networks in organisations: The effects of social status and local ties. *Human Resource Management*, *52*(4), 485–510. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm

Denzin, N. K. (2016). *The qualitative manifesto: A call to arms*. https://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=bNNyDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT11&dq=+Denzin,+N.K.+(2016),+The+Qualitative+Manifesto:+A+Call+to+Arms,+Routledge,+Abingdon.&ots=Yq-BiJlAkt&sig=bLOZ8SUD-4XrFlxYDhn6atvsz4Y&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Yvonna, S. (2006). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (4th ed., Vol. 20). Emerald. https://doi.org/10.1108/09504120610655394

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. 2005. Research at grass roots. 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Dicicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. (2006). The qualitative research interview. Wiley Online Library. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x

Dlamini, N. (2019). *#BizTrends2019: NPOs need to be nimble*. Biz Community. https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/721/185921.html

Donohoe, M., & Carlson, M. (2010). Leadership in transition. In *The executive director's guide to thriving as a nonprofit leader* (pp. 255–282). https://doi.org/10.1097/00005110-199010000-00003

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 532–550. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351106573-2

Eisenhardt, K. M. (2021). What is the Eisenhardt method, really? *Strategic Organization*, *19*(1), 147–160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020982866

Estedadi, E., Shahhoseini, R., Hamidi, K., (2015). The importance of succession planning in organisations. *Advanced Social Humanities and Management* 2(3) 2015:41-47

Esterhuyse, W. P. (2003). The challenge of transformation: Breaking the barriers. *South African Journal of Business Management*, *34*(3), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v34i3.682

Florea, L., Cheung, Y. H., & Herndon, N. C. (2013). For all good reasons: Role of values in organisational sustainability. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *114*(3), 393–408. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1355-x

Melnichuk, T. (2022). Forbes. *What is a diversity and inclusion policy and why is it important for companies to have one?*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/06/14/what-is-a-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-and-why-is-it-important-for-companies-to-have-one/?sh=649381b7b296

Fredette, C., Bradshaw, P., & Krause, H. (2016). From diversity to inclusion: A multimethod study of diverse governing groups. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *45*, 28S-51S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764015599456

Friedman, S. D. (2017). *Succession systems in large corporations: Characteristics and correlates of performance - University of Cape Town*. Taylor & Francis E-Books. https://uct.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=cdi_scopus_primary_62787

9253&context=PC&vid=27UCT_INST:27UCT&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Primo Central&tab=Everything&query=any,contains, Friedman, S. D. (1986). Succession sys

Froelich, K., Gregory, M., & Rathge, R. (2011). Succession planning in nonprofit organisations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *22*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.20037

Fulmer, R. M., & Conger, J. A. (2004). Developing Leaders with 2020 Vision. Financial Executive, 20(5), 38-41.

Gastrow, S. (2019, October 5). *The proliferation of non-profits is an indication of state failure*. Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2019-10-08-the-proliferation-of-non-profits-is-an-indication-of-state-failure/

Gather, J., & Erickson, J. (1993). Affirmative action in Zimbabwe: A private sector case study. In D. Innes, M. Kentridge, & H. Perold (Eds.), *Reversing discrimination: Affirmative action in the workplace* (pp. 149–168). Oxford University Press.

Gehman, J., Glaser, V., Eisenhardt, K., Gioia, D., Langley, A., & Corley, K. (2018). Finding theory-method fit: A comparison of three qualitative approaches to theory building. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *27*, 284–300. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492617706029

Gersick, C. J. G. (1988). Time an transition in work teams: Toward a new model of group development. *Academy of Management Journal*, *31*(1), 9–41. https://doi.org/10.2307/256496

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, *16*(1), 15–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151

Gioia, D. A., Price, K. N., Hamilton, A. L., & Thomas, J. B. (2010). of Processes Involved in the Formation of Organizational Identity. *Fortune*, *55*(1), 1–46. http://www.atypon-link.com/JGSCU/doi/abs/10.2189/asqu.2010.55.1.1

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). *Discovery of grounded theory : Strategies for qualitative research*. Piscataway: Routledge. https://web-s-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzU4MDMxNV9fQU41?sid=10be0997-cc90-43c0-af3d-03305f2e57a6@redis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1

González, C. (2010). Leadership, diversity and succession planning in academia. In *CSHE research & occasional paper series* (CSHE Research & Occasional Paper Series). http://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/publications.php?id=360

Gothard, S., & Austin, M. J. (2013). Leadership Succession Planning: Implications for Nonprofit Human Service Organisations. *Administration in Social Work*, *37*(3), 272–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/03643107.2012.684741

Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *European Journal of Marketing*, *39*(3-4 SPEC. ISS.), 294–308. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560510581782

Gounder, S. (2012). Research methodology and research questions. In *Cloud computing* (Issue March 2012, pp. 84–193). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333015026_Chapter_3_-_Research_Methodology_and_Research_Method

Greer, C. R., & Virick, M. (2008). Diverse succession planning: Lessons from the industry leaders. *Human Resource Management*, *47*(2), 351–367. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20216

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *3*(1), 42–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104

Guerci, M., Radaelli, G., Battisi, F. D., & Siletti, E. (2017). Empirical insights on the nature of synergies among HRM policies—An analysis of an ethics-oriented HRM system. *Journal of Business Research*, 71,66–73.

Habib, A. (2005). State-civil society relations in post - apartheid South Africa. *Social Research*, *72*(3), 671–692. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971786

Hafeez, S., Chatti S., Zaman U., (2022). Examining the effect of high-performance human resource practices on team performance in development sector projects: Mediating role of trust. *Journal of Public Affairs*., 22(1), e2375. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2375

Hailey, J., & James, R. (2004). "Trees die from the top": International perspectives on NGO leadership development. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, *15*(4), 343–353. https://doi.org/10.1007/sl

Harris, S. G., & Sutton, R. I. (1986). Functions of parting ceremonies in dying organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, *29*(1), 5–30. https://doi.org/10.2307/255857

Harrison, A. K. (2018). *Introduction to ethnography - Oxford Scholarship*. Oxford Scholarship Online. https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/view/10.1093/oso/9780199371785.001.0001/oso-9780199371785-chapter-1

Heinrich, V. F. (2001). The role of NGOs in strengthening the foundations of South African democracy. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations.*, *12*(1), 1–15. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27927705

Hezlett, S. and Gibson, S. (2007) Linking mentoring and social capital: implications for career and organisation development, *Advances in Developing Human Resources*,9 (3), 384–412. doi: 10.1177/1523422307304102

Howard, A., & Coombe, D. (2006). National level intentional change: A story of two countries. *Journal of Management Development*, *25*(7), 732–742. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710610678526

Hubbard, E. E. (2012). The diversity scorecard: Evaluating the impact of diversity on organisational performance. *The Diversity Scorecard: Evaluating the Impact of Diversity on Organisational Performance*, 1–348. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080470061/DIVERSITY-SCORECARD-EDWARD-HUBBARD

Ibarra, H. (1995). Race, opportunity, and diversity of social circles in managerial networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(3), 673–703. https://doi.org/10.5465/256742

Institute of Directors Southern Africa. (2016). *King IV report on corporate governance for South Africa 2016*. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iodsa.co.za/resource/collection/684B68A7-B768-465C-8214-E3A007F15A5A/IoDSA_King_IV_Report_-_WebVersion.pdf

Irvine, A., Drew, P., & Sainsbury, R. (2013). "Am I not answering your questions properly?" Clarification, adequacy and responsiveness in semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews. *Qualitative Research*, *13*(1), 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112439086

Jackson, L. D. (2017). *A critical examination of senior executive leadership succession planning and management with implications for underrepresented minorities*. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fursa.mercer.edu%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F10898%2F3740%2FJackson_mercer_1160E_10033.pdf%3Fsequence%3D3%26isAllowed%3Dy&clen=6260202

Jacob, S., & Furgerson, S. (2015). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(42), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1718

James, R. (2008). Leadership development inside-out in Africa. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *18*(3), 359–375. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml

Jiang, K. Lepak, D.P., Baer, J.C. (2012). How does human resource management influence organisational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms. *The Academy of Management Journal,* (55)6, 1264-1294. Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23414255

Joecks, J., Pull, K., & Vetter, K. (2013). Gender diversity in the boardroom and firm performance: What exactly constitutes a "Critical Mass?" *Journal of Business Ethics*, *118*(1), 61–72. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1553-6

Jones, B. (2012) Diversification in higher education administration: leadership paradigms considered. In G. Jean-Marie and B. Lloyd-Jones (Eds) *Women of Color in Higher Education: Changing Directions and New Perspectives* (Somerville, MA, Emerald Publishing), 3–18.

Julie, F. J. (2010). *The experiences and perceptions of 6 NGO leaders on the role and value of formal and informal learning in leadership continuity in the NGO sector across 3 historical periods in South Africa*. http://hdl.handle.net/11427/14750

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation.* (1st ed.). Basic Books.

Karimi, F., Génois, M., Wagner, C., Singer, P., & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Homophily influences ranking of minorities in social networks. *Scientific Reports*, *8*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-29405-7

Katz, H. (2021). The role of executive coaching in managing organisations. *Human Service Organisations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, *45*(3), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2021.1915439

Kempster, M. (2019). *Leading for sustainability: An exploratory study of founder transitions in nonprofit organisation in the Western Cape.* https://uct.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma9910336881504041&context=L&vid=27UCT_INST:27UCT&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local Search Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,Michelle Kempster&offset=0

Kezar, A., & Eckel, P. (2007). Learning to ensure the success of students of color: A systemic approach to effecting change. *Change*, *39*(4), 18–24. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40178053

Kilian, C. M. C., Hukai, D., & McCarty, C. E. (2005). Building diversity in the pipeline to corporate leadership. *Journal of Management Development, 24(2*), 155–168. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710510579518

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018) Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing, *European Journal of General Practice*, *24(1)*, 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Langley, A. (1999). Strategies for theorizing from process data. *The Academy of Management Review*, *24*(4), 691–710. http://www.jstor.org/stable/259349?origin=crossref

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *2*(3), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303

Lehohla, P. (2015). *Statistics of the non-profit sector for South Africa, 2012* (Issue February). http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/D04072/D040722012.pdf

Leitch, C. M., Hill, F. M., & Harrison, R. T. (2010). The philosophy and practice of interpretivist research in entrepreneurship quality, validation, and trust. *Organizational Research Methods*, *13*(1), 67–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428109339839

Makapela, L. & Mtshelwana, N. D. P., (2021). Exploring the use and influence of human resource policies within South African municipalities. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*.(19)0, a1534. https://doi. org/10.4102/sajhrm.v19i0.1534

Maré, G. (2005). Race, nation, democracy: Questioning patriotism in the new South Africa. *Social Research*, *72*(3), 501–530. https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/40971779

Marsden, P. v. (1988). Homogeneity in confiding relations. *Social Networks*, *10*(1), 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(88)90010-X

Matotoka, M. D., & Odeku, K. O. (2021). Untangling discrimination in the private sector workplace in South Africa: Paving the way for black African women progression to managerial positions. *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*, *21*(1), 47–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1358229121990569

McIntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, *2*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393615597674

Mckee, G., & Froelich, K. (2016). Executive succession planning: Barriers and substitutes in nonprofit organisations. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, *87*(4), 587–601. https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12129

Middleton, F.(2019). *The four types of reliability in research – definitions and examples.* https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-reliability/

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, *7*(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571

Moraka, N. v. (2016). Interpretation of transformation - perspectives from mining executives in South Africa. *Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy*, *116*(5), 455–463. https://doi.org/10.17159/2411-9717/2016/v116n5a11

Myeza, A., & April, K. (2021). Atypical black leader emergence: South African self-perceptions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*(626473), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.626473

Ngcamu, B. S., & Teferra, D. (2018). The effect of skills development programmes and leadership opportunities brought by transformation: A case of the Durban university of technology. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *45*(2), 130–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2015.11893494

Ngobeni, M. (2006, May 28). Black job-hopping not all about the money. *Sunday Times*, *1*, 8.

Nkomo, S., & Cox, T. J. (1990). Factors affecting the upward mobility of black managers in private sector organisations. *Review of Black Political Economy*, *18*(3), 39–57. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02717874

Nkomo, S. M., & Kriek, D. (2011). Leading organisational change in the "new" South Africa. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, *84*(3), 453–470. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.2011.02020.x

Nkonyeni, N., & Radebe, K. (2020). *NGOs today: Competing for resources, power and agency*. Mail & Guardian. https://mg.co.za/analysis/2020-03-05-ngos-today-competing-for-resources-power-and-agency/

Nonprofit Organisations Act 71, Government Gazette (1997). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-09511-8_2

Nonprofit Sustainability | National Council of Nonprofits. (2019). https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/nonprofit-sustainability

Oosthuizen, R. M., Tonelli, L., & Mayer, C. H. (2019). Subjective experiences of employment equity in South African organisations. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *17*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v17i0.1074

Ossenkop, C., Vinkenburg, C. J., Jansen, P. G. W., & Ghorashi, H. (2015). Ethnic diversity and social capital in upward mobility systems: Problematizing the permeability of intra-organisational career boundaries. *Career Development International*, *20*(5), 539–558. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-12-2013-0148

Palys, T. (2008). Purposive sampling. In L. M. Given (Ed.), The Sage encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods (pp. 697-698, Volume 2). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Patel, L. (2012). Developmental social policy, social welfare services and the non-profit sector in South Africa. *Social Policy and Administration*, *46*(6), 603–618. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2012.00858.x

Reis, R. (2012) Tomorrow's Professor (Wiley, IEEE). *The Robbins Report: Higher Education*.(1963) (London, HMSO).

Reynolds, G. (2011). Exploring the meaning of coaching for newly appointed senior leaders in their first twelve to eighteen months in role. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, *5*, 15. http://www.business.brookes.ac.uk/research/areas/coachingandmentoring/

Roman, L. J., & Mason, R. B. (2019). Employment equity in the South African retail sector: Legal versus competence and business imperatives. *African Journal of Employee Relations (Formerly South African Journal of Labour Relations)*, *39*(2), 84–104. https://doi.org/10.25159/2520-3223/5873

Rosha, A., & Lace, N. (2016). The scope of coaching in the context of organisational change. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market and Complexity, 2(2),1-14.*

Rothwell, W. J. (2010). *Effective Succession Planning* (4th ed.). American Management Association.

Rowley, J. (2002). Using Case Studies in Research. *Managment Research News*, *25*(1), 16–27.

Ryder, A. (2020). *Non-profit organisations' general staff, benefits and employment regulations salary survey report*. http://www.rewardspecialist.co.za/salary-surveys/2020-npo-and-health-care-programmes-surveys/

Samdanis, M., & Özbilgin, M. (2020). The duality of an atypical leader in diversity management: The legitimization and delegitimization of diversity beliefs in organisations. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *22*(2), 101–119. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12217

Santora, J. C., & Sarros, J. C. (2001). CEO tenure in nonprofit community-based organisations: A multiple case study. *Career Development International*, *6*(1), 56–60. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430110381043

Santora, J. C., Sarros, J. C., & Esposito, M. (2010). Small to mid-sized nonprofit leadership development initiatives: Organisational lessons learned. *Development and Learning in Organisations*, *24*(6), 17–19. https://doi.org/10.1108/14777281011084711

Santora, J., Caro, M., & Sarros, J. (2007). Succession in nonprofit organisations: an insider/outsider perspective. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, *72*(4), 26–31.

Schoeman, N. (2010). *The drivers and restraining factors for achieving employment equity at management level in gold mining companies*. https://repository.up.ac.za/xmlui/handle/2263/51278/browse?value=Restraining+factors&type=subject

Shelton, C. D., Mckenna, M. K., & Darling, J. R. (2002). Leading in the age of paradox: Optimizing behavioral style, job fit and cultural cohesion. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, *23*(7), 372–379. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730210445801

Sims, G. A. (2014). The spectre of academic employment.pdf. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *31*(4), 30. https://doi.org/ISSN: 1557-5411

Street, C. T., & Gallupe, R. B. (2009). A proposal for operationalizing the pace and scope of organisational change in management studies. *Organisational Research Methods*, *12*(4), 720–737. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428108327881

Smith, R.V. & Conlon, R. (2010). Succession management: The role of the board and CEO in ensuring business continuity. *Society for Human Resource Management.* https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/succession-management-role-board-ceo-ensuring-business-continuity

Swilling, M., & Russell, B. (2002). *The size and scope of the non-profit sector in South Africa*. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11910/8499

Thomas, A. (2002). *Employment equity in South Africa: lessons from the global school*. *23*(3), 237–255. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720210432211

Thomas, D. A. (1993). Racial dynamics in cross-race developmental relationships. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *38*(2), 169. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393410

Thomas, D. A. (2001). The truth about mentoring minorities: Race matters. *Harvard Business Review*, *79*(4), 98–108.

Thomas, D. A., & Ely R. J. (1996). Making differences matter: A new paradigm for managing diversity. *Harvard Business Review*, *74*, 79–90. http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=dfa81e6a-ec9e-4f6b-8859-8a6dc62863cb%40sdc-v-sessmgr03

Trochim, W. M. K. (2006). The qualitative debate. *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualmeth.php

Tuomala, J., Yeh, D., & Smit Milway K., (2018). Making founder successions work. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 26 – 33. http://libaccess.mcmaster.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=128107556&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Tyatya, K. (2018). *NGO leadership: Time to embrace transformation as part of succession planning*. https://tshikululu.org.za/ngo-leadership-time-embrace-transformation-part-succession-planning/%0ANGO

Webster, E., & Francis, D. The paradox of inequality in South Africa: A challenge from the workplace. *Transformation: Critical Perspective on Southern Africa, 101(1),* 11 – 35.

Williams, D. A., & Wade-Golden, K. C. (2020). What is a chief diversity officer. *Inside Higher ED*, 1–6. http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/workplace/2006/04/18/williams

Wilson, J. L., & Meyer, K. A. (2013). The treatment and use of best practices for diversity in position announcements for new presidents. *Innovative Higher Education*, *38*(2), 91–104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-012-9227-y

Wolff, H. G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*(1), 196–206. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013350

Wolfred, T. (2008). *Building leaderful organisations: succession planning for nonprofits.* (Vol. 6). https://doi.org/10.1016/s0278-2391(96)90782-x

Wyngaard, R. G., & Hendricks, P. S. (2010). South Africa's King III: Highlighting the need for a separate non-profit governance code. *The International Journal of Civil Society Law*, *8*(2), 177–187. https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/ijcsl8&div=20&id=&page=

Appendix A:

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

Succession planning for leadership transformation in the South African non-profit sector

Interview schedule: ex-NPO Executive leader

Biographical details:

1. Participant's name:
2. Qualification:
3. Race:
4. Gender:

Organisational details

1. Name of NPO:
2. Year of NPO registration:
3. Annual income at the time of leadership transition:
4. Staff size at the time of the leadership transition:
5. Duration in the Executive leadership position:

Policies

1. Was internal succession planning mentioned/described in the staff policies?
2. Did the organisation have an employment equity policy?
3. Could you describe the staff development policy at the organisation?
4. Did the organisation have a staff development budget? If so, how much?
5. How would you describe the performance appraisal process?

Executive leader

1. How long before announcing your intention to leave did you start preparing for succession?
2. Could you describe any processes, practices or policies you put in place to prepare for succession planning?
3. Who was responsible for implementing the above?

4. Could you describe any processes, practices or policies you put in place to support the transformation of the organisation?
5. How was the transformation plans implemented in the organisation?
6. What was the views of the board regarding the leadership transformation of the organisation?
7. What was the role of the board in the succession planning process?
8. How diverse was the board at the time of your leadership?
9. How did you, as the Executive leader, support the development of potential leaders?
10. Could you share any examples of no-cost leadership development opportunities you encouraged, e.g. acting up, covering for someone on leave, etc?
11. What impact did legislation such as the EEA or B-BBEE Act have on the motivation for leadership transformation?
12. What motivated you to leave the organisation?
13. How much notice did you give the board about your intention to leave?
14. What was the size of a transition/succession budget?
15. What would you do differently if you had to address succession planning for transformation at another NPO?

Appendix B:

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

Succession planning for leadership transformation in the South African non-profit sector

Interview schedule: Current NPO Executive leader

Biographical details:

1. Participant's name:
2. Qualification:
3. Race:
4. Gender:

Organisational details:

1. Name of NPO:
2. Year of NPO registration:
3. Annual income at the time of leadership transition:
4. Staff size at the time of the leadership transition:
5. Length of employment before appointed as the Executive leader:

Policies:

6. Was internal succession planning mentioned/described in the staff policies?
7. Did the organisation have an employment equity policy?
8. Could you describe the staff development policy at the organisation?
9. Did the organisation have a staff development budget? If so, how much?
10. How would you describe the performance appraisal process?

Executive leader

1. How would you describe the leadership style of the previous Executive Director?
2. How did this leader influence your personal career development?
3. How would you describe the previous leader's commitment to transformation?

4. Could you describe the board's commitment to organisational transformation?
5. How diverse was the board of trustees?
6. Please describe what exposure you had to board meetings in your prior role?
7. Could you describe any succession planning processes, practices or policies that you were aware of?
8. What leadership development opportunities did you receive? For example a paid-for development programme or a coach?
9. What kind of mentorship did you receive, either internal or external? If so, were they the same race as you?
10. What impact did the race of the mentor have on the experience?
11. Could you please describe any opportunities for growth you were exposed to, e.g. acting up whilst your manager was on leave, representing the organisation at an important stakeholder meeting, running a project outside of your area of expertise?
12. Other than your colleagues, what other networks were you part of in your field of interest or the NPO sector?
13. How did this network support your growth and decision to apply for the Executive role?
14. What/who motivated you to apply for the executive director role when it became available?
15. What was the most valuable exposure/experience preparing you for the ED role?

Appendix C:

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM:

Participant name:

……

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by **Este Buchholz** as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MPhil Degree at the Graduate School of Business. I understand that the research is designed to gather information about **Succession Planning for leadership transformation in South African non-profit organisations** and that I will be one of approximately of 12 people being interviewed for this research.

Background and purpose of the research

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) play an important role in South Africa's economy and provide essential services to the most vulnerable in society. The sustainability of an organisation could be at risk when the executive leader leaves the organisation and no internal candidates have been developed to step up into the role. Furthermore, it is important that NPOs reflect the demographics of South African society, whether they must comply with relevant legislation or not. Most of the research on NPO succession planning are based in the US and studies on leadership transformation in South Africa have been done in the private or public sector, not NPOs. The aim of this research is to address the gap in the current academic literature by exploring the unique ways in which NPOs should implement succession planning to address executive leadership transformation within the South African non-profit sector.

Ethics approval

Ethical consent for the study has been approved by the *UCT Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee* .

Participation and confidentiality

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, that I will not be compensated and that I may withdraw at any time.

The interview will take approximately 45 - 60 minutes to complete and will be audio recorded.

I understand that I will not be identified by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

Consent

I consent to participate in this interview, based on the terms outlined above and subject to the following additional condition of my own (if any).

----------	**----------**
Signed by interviewee	**Date**
……..	**…….**
Signed by Student	**Date**

Faculty of Commerce

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch, 7701
2.26 Leslie Commerce Building, Upper Campus
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 4375/ 5748 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 4369
E-mail: jacques.rousseau@uct.ac.za
Internet: www.uct.ac.za
@Commerce UCT **UCT Commerce Faculty Office**

Appendix D:

22 09 2021

Este Buchholz

Graduate School of Business

University of Cape Town

REF: REC 2021/09/016

Succession Planning for leadership transformation in the South African non-profit sector

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Aug-2023 .

Your clearance may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

2021.09.22
22:28:46 +02'00'

Jacques Rousseau

Commerce Research Ethics Chair
University of Cape Town
Commerce Faculty Office
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

Office Telephone: +27 (0)21 650 2695 / 4375
Office Fax: +27 (0)21 650 4369
E-mail: jacques.rousseau@uct.ac.za
Website: http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/com/Ethics-in-Research