



Year One Overview Report

Executive Summary

This report, a companion document to the [Bi-Annual Report](#) (2018-2020), provides an overview of the leadership and coaching capacity developed in the first year of coaching in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopia pilot project - in a pre-COVID era - was designed to explore whether virtual coaching could be delivered by a volunteer team to NGO leaders in such a way as to increase their effectiveness as leaders which would, over time, enable their organizations to become more effective and thus able to offer more support to their beneficiaries. The delivery of both individual and team coaching to NGOs was the main mechanism for developing NGO leaders with its success being measured quantitatively by means of an impact evaluation approach and qualitatively, through the development of case studies and stories. *The results from Year One indicate that the early part of the hypothesis holds: NGO leaders became more effective.* Additional longitudinal measurement is required to confirm that the increased effectiveness of the senior leader and team is translating into improved and/or expanded delivery of support to the community over time.

In addition, for all NGO leaders attending the Summit, a select number of leadership development materials were curated and shared, including a number of webinars featuring both local and international coaches as well as special guests. Topics covered included fostering collaboration, giving and receiving feedback, understanding team dynamics and establishing social enterprises. While impact is difficult to measure, anecdotal feedback from NGO leaders indicated that these materials were of use.

Coaching capacity has been developed predominantly through the growth and achievements of the local coaches, trained during the lead-up to the Summit. Nineteen of the 29 trained have received certification through the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Ten of this group were selected as co-coaches to deliver the Year One coaching with a further six joining the Year Two coaching team. Themes identified following an individual interview process conducted in April/May 2019, suggest that local coaches believe that the training and resources provided have improved their performance,



regardless of their current profession, with some also reporting integrating coaching explicitly into their businesses. Towards the end of 2019, a sub group of local coaches hosted a business development/coaching education session for business leaders in downtown Addis, effectively spreading the word about the availability of leadership coaching delivered by local talent.

The full set of impact evaluation results related to the effectiveness of virtual coaching are available in the [Year One Impact Report](#) with the related stories being accessible in the [Year One of the Coaching Journey](#) report.

Background

EthicalCoach is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) corporation in the United States for the purpose of providing coaching to NGO leaders around the globe. More details about EthicalCoach's background, corporate structure and pilot approach are available on the [website](#) and in the [Bi-Annual Report](#) August 1, 2018-July 31, 2020.

The initial pilot design included offering coaching only to the most senior leader in selected Ethiopian non-governmental/civil society organizations (NGOs). Early research conducted by a team of volunteers suggested that some changes would be needed to deliver the full benefits of coaching given the existing hierarchical and somewhat traditional culture and the limited appreciation of the value of coaching as a leadership development tool. The design of the coaching program was adjusted to include screening experienced international coaches for depth and range of cultural competence; extending the coaching grant from an offer only to coach NGO leaders to a program that included coaching for the NGO senior team; and the development of local coach capacity. This local coach development both extended the capacity to offer coaching within Ethiopia and also, by partnering with the international coaches to provide team coaching, expanded the level of local knowledge and cultural competence across the coach team.

Approach and Methodology

From the outset, the intent was to measure the effectiveness of coaching delivered virtually to NGO leaders in Ethiopia. A number of different models were researched prior to the selection of an impact assessment approach based on demonstrated success with a selection of World Bank projects. A more complete discussion of this structured and comparative approach is included as part of the [Year One Impact Report](#). The key steps in the process included:

- Conducting **semi-structured interviews** with NGOs to gain an understanding of the NGO leadership and coaching landscape.

- Developing a **theory of change** that assumes that coaching will contribute to the development of desired leadership behaviors in NGO leaders and their teams, which will contribute to increased leadership effectiveness, which then contributes to increased NGO performance.
- **Selecting 10 NGOs** to receive one year of coaching in Year 1, starting in January 2019.
- Conducting **baseline and endpoint surveys** at coaching commencement and completion.
- Conducting **coach pulse surveys and qualitative interviews**.
- Conducting **follow-up data collection and analysis**.

In the end, seven of the ten NGOs actively engaged with the coaching program and of those, five completed the surveys. Some of the issues with the data gathering are common across most coaching projects, including agreeing definitive measures of behaviour change and impact. Other more specific limitations include: the use of self assessment data only; all questionnaires being available only on-line and only in English; and the small sample set.

Value was seen in having the direct voices of the NGO leaders and coaches captured. To that end, a range of interviews and data gathering was undertaken and stories were developed for six of the seven coaching clients, the missing NGO received only team leader coaching. For an overview of the methodology and analysis, access the full Year One of the Coaching Journey [report](#).

Introducing the Players

The forty two NGO leaders who received coaching reflected the following characteristics:

- **55%** male, 45% female
- **75%** were **between the ages of 30-49**
- **90%** are **Ethiopian**, with 5% Ethiopian diaspora and 5% expatriates
- **85%** have a **Masters degree** or higher education qualification
- **6% had received coaching previously**, described as short-term (3 months), informal, virtual and/or focused on enhancing sales capacity
- **70%** had worked in the NGO/civil society sector for 10 + years
- NGO leaders had the title of Country Director, Executive Director, or Program Manager. NGO leadership team members' roles centered on the management of functions in the organization.

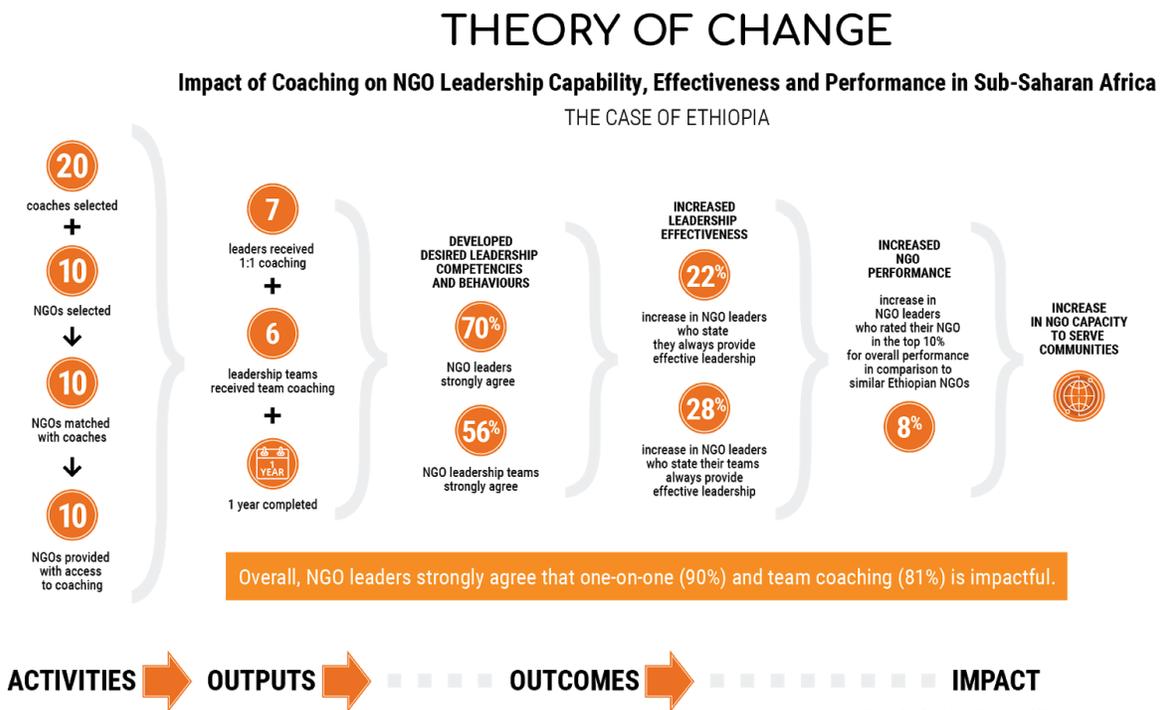
The NGOs varied in size, maturity and areas of focus.

For more details, access the [Year One Impact Report](#).

The ten (10) international coaches were drawn from five different countries. They all traveled to Ethiopia to attend the opening Leadership Coaching Summit and to meet their coaching clients. The ten (10) local coaches had received coach training and supervision over a three month period leading up to the Ethiopian NGO Leadership Coaching Summit and were accredited through the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). More details are available on the [website](#).

Key Findings

The results of the impact evaluation indicate *overwhelming support from the NGO leaders - 90% for one-on-one and 81% for team coaching - in terms of the benefits received*. Not surprisingly, they would also all recommend coaching to other NGO leaders. The schematic below provides an overview of all elements of the Theory of Change:



Over the course of the year, the leaders reported that they had made progress. Key areas mentioned include: critical thinking and decision making; listening and communicating

better especially in difficult situations; stronger management of emotions; and learning to trust others. The impact of individual leadership coaching was cited in terms of building confidence and developing more self reliance; improved relationships; enhanced ability to understand, interpret and act on organization dynamics; and becoming more self reflective.

The key impacts of team coaching were described as: achieving alignment on vision, values, goals and direction; thinking more strategically and creatively; personal and collective behavioural change; developing transparency and trust within the team; strengthening team relationship spirit and synergy; and developing the ability to talk about tough things and resolve conflict.

In describing how they would motivate other NGO leaders to embrace one-on-one coaching, the messages centre on *growing personal and professional leadership and achieving tangible behavioral changes*. Key messages to motivate the adoption of coaching include: establishing strong and dependable team leadership; expanding alignment and strategic focus; strengthening the team's understanding of systemic thinking; motivating self as well as team development; and strengthening relationships, team spirit and synergy. NGO leaders also indicate that they would emphasize that it takes courage and commitment to achieve results.

Full results are available in the [Year One Impact Report](#).

Similar results are visible when reading the [stories in the Year One of the Coaching Journey report](#): the emphasis placed on conversations to build relationships, strengthened teamwork and team spirit, thinking more strategically both individually and collectively, increased resilience, and expanded personal growth and reflection. Interviewees report that learnings from the coaching were shared with their teams and across the organization, leading to more widespread change. Some specific benefits cited relating to the community include: winning a grant that enabled the installation of additional water, hygiene and sanitation facilities at 69 schools; more efficient implementation of projects that allowed for additional projects to be taken on; and more effective interaction with stakeholders generally and members of the community specifically, whether farmers, children, or families.

Key Success Factors

Virtual leadership coaching can succeed even when challenged by a number of circumstances such as poor internet connectivity, a wide range of fluency in English,

differing expectations with respect to coaching, and many competing priorities. Factors that were identified as important in the delivery of a successful program included:

1. *NGO selection*: selecting individuals and organizations who saw value in the idea of coaching. The financial security of the NGO was also a key dynamic: it is difficult for any leadership team to focus on team development when an organization is under financial duress. Similarly, team coaching is more effective when the membership of the team remains constant
2. *Contracting*: clarifying expectations and priorities, including attendance, scheduling and ways of working together
3. *Team sponsorship*: support for the leaders from within the organization to establish coaching as an ongoing priority
4. *Experienced coaches*: selecting coaches with expertise in matters relevant to the NGO; the ability to offer best practice insights as well as practical solutions; and extensive cultural competence
5. *Mix of virtual and in-person interactions*: providing opportunities to meet at the outset of the training and for the coach to have a site visit. The international coaches of three of the NGOs were able to meet with their NGO clients in person over the course of the year. These visits were described as being extremely helpful not only in moving specific discussions forward but also in building commitment. There was also general agreement that the presence of the local coach in the room with the client for each session strengthened the coaching experience
6. *Volunteer engagement*: selecting for initiative and mission alignment; managing expectations; offering well defined work packages with clear ownership; providing relevant recognition
7. *Infrastructure*: with virtual coaching being dependent on connectivity, the coaches had to be endlessly creative in planning work arounds given fairly frequent service interruptions. Having computers available for all team members or a large screen in the room as well as good speakers also enhances the coaching experience.

Supporting evidence for these factors can be found in the Year One of the Coaching Journey [report](#).

Designers of a virtual coaching program would be well served to spend time with key stakeholders upfront to identify the current situation and map out a preferred future state so that there is agreement from the start as to what success looks like. The experience of EthicalCoach is that this is not easy and requires a special set of skills and process.

In conclusion, it is definitely possible to deliver virtual coaching that makes a difference in the lives of those receiving coaching and their beneficiaries as well as the coaches and other volunteers working on the program. However, proving the difference requires a



significant upfront investment in design and implementation including finding volunteers able and willing to create the design, and then pilot and roll it out successfully.

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