# LEADERSHIP IN POLICY RESPONSE TO DEMENTIA: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract**

**Statement of the Problem**: Population around the world is facing a huge variety of challenges. Poverty, corruption, military conflicts, migration, new diseases and natural disasters are just a few things (phenomena) which prevent many people from quality basic services provided to them. The need for the development of additional types of services is also due to the increasing aging of the population and hence the increasing in the number of people living with dementia. Meanwhile, the absence of dementia policy in the developing countries leaves without services not only people living with dementia, but their families or caregivers. Given these challenges, the integration of dementia programs into the complex healthcare system as well as social welfare system is not an easy task for any country. This is especially difficult for countries with limited resources, low levels of population awareness concerning dementia, and high levels of stigma and ageism.

To meet the goals given an ever-changing and complex situation with healthcare, the interdependence of many aspects, scientists emphasize the need to develop leadership that could help to change actions and succeed in both development of dementia programs and their implementation.

**The purpose** of this study is to explore the meaning and importance of leadership at all levels of decision-making process based on the experience of the countries with dementia policy to help Ukraine in the development of its own comprehensive response to dementia**.**

**Methodology and Theoretical Orientation:** The study has a descriptive design that set out a framework for a systematic search of literature. Three main tasks were defined for conducting a thorough analysis: to form a clearer vision of leadership in strategically tackling dementia challenges; to identify the possible ways of facilitating collaboration in low-income countries; to find out more about those playing a crucial role in developing leadership in the development of the dementia policy.

**Finding:** It has been proven that leadership can bring about positive changes, but the question remains how to give impetus to the process of stimulating and supporting leadership development, which can play a crucial role in promoting the dementia agenda.

In formulating a comprehensive policy response to dementia WHO points out three central elements: leadership, governance and multi-sectoral collaboration. Therefore, the concepts of "leadership" and "governance" are not identical, but they are complementary and indivisible in most cases.

There are many examples of individual leaders in the history of dementia policy-shaping that have transformed general thinking into new radical ideas, facilitated the transition to new knowledge or the pursuit of innovation. On the one hand, there is a need to know who these leaders are and what skills they are required to have, specifically to form and implement the dementia policy. Due to the multidimensional nature of dementia, on the other hand, it is not enough to have individual traits alone, although they are useful and even necessary in creating good leaders, since leadership development depends on the willingness of the environment to perceive change, the political will and support at different levels, as well as on teamwork.

Each stakeholder has a unique role to play - knowledge generation, decision making, advocacy, service development and raising awareness of dementia, which generally ensures the integrity of the process. And in each of these areas leadership is important and contributes to the best success in policymaking and initiatives. Therefore, it is important to understand the role of each stakeholder that is considered as a leader, the mutual influence of the participants and to determine their priority, as

is it important to understand how to create a supportive environment for the development of leadership aiming to addresses the needs of the population.

The past two decades have seen a sharp increase in civil society activity and citizens' involvement in shaping the national and global response to the spread of dementia. Such involvement ranges from discussions of policy vision to advocating the development of the necessary services based on human rights. The private sector is also actively involved. Moreover, the academic environment is beginning to assert its role as a catalyst for necessary social change, in addition to being a producer of knowledge. But leadership examples indicate that while the initial impetus for health interventions can be obtained from any of a variety of actors, the impetus for successful, scalable and sustainable health interventions can only be created by the government. Government as such needs to be actively involved in bringing together many different groups to ensure the comprehensiveness of the process.

Since many developing countries are focused on achieving positive shifts in dementia issues, their attention is drawn to international experience, that is, to those countries that have been able to make dementia one of their national priorities or have made significant strides in this direction. Leadership in developing countries must be capable of acting in the face of uncertainty and untenable evidence. Therefore, the need to study international practices is driven by the need to be guided by knowledge from various sources to summarize evidence-based and substantiated facts. In shaping the national response, the core potential of leadership is to make the best use of their internal resources and external partnerships, to transform the most relevant and easily applied knowledge into the most productive areas of action that can maximize the benefits of improving services for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

**Conclusion and Significance:** Discussions about leadership in the sphere of dementia are focused mainly on experiences in high-income countries, while little information is available on the experience of developing countries. Studying international experience provides an opportunity for the developing countries to rethink their own leadership experience, to enrich it with proven international practice tools, as well as to develop the ability to analyse situations related to leadership challenges, apply persuasion methods, make team decisions, and communicate effectively.

Lesson learned from this experience indicates the need to create platforms that provide tools for leadership development, bringing all stakeholders together to promote ideas in both national and global contexts. Globally, there are separate platforms for civil society debate, academic conferences, and the private sector. However, there are very few platforms where diverse groups of actors plan concerted action to overcome obstacles in the context of dementia, actively engaging and supporting developing countries. This should encourage more multidisciplinary research, quality leadership input to support families, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

There are numerous actors that in one way or another influence the formation and implementation of the dementia policy. They are academic and research institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, patient groups, citizens' representatives, as well as international players, such as donors, development partners, and charitable foundations. Therefore, it would be appropriate to focus more on examining how leadership in each of these groups complements or competes with other groups, how priorities are set, and which leadership development models are most suitable for countries where dementia is not yet on the agenda.

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**Biography**



**Oleksandra Khudoba** is a postgraduate researcher who is developing the dementia strategy in Ukraine. Within these activities, she focuses on developing a dementia policy strategy and a service delivery mechanism to answer several simple questions: Who? What? Why? and How? Her aim is to develop the ideas and receive evidence-based and practical advice for developing dementia-related activities at the government and NGO levels. Having substantial academic and administrative background, she researches innovative ideas and approaches for managing dementia issues in Ukraine.

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