



# InterAction Leadership Programme


**InterAction**

**takes a new look at**

**Africa**

**QoD**  
Questions of Difference





# It's about thinking and behaving differently, conversations for change and a new relationship between Africa and the UK

New tools and techniques that work in Africa and the UK



# InterAction – an innovative leadership experience...

The InterAction Leadership Programme is one of the British Council's high-profile and pioneering initiatives that is designed to assist emerging African leaders as they strive to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The programme's aim is to provide support to vibrant and creative individuals who, in their search for alternatives, dare to challenge inherited and established practices of leadership. The British Council partnered with Questions of Difference (QoD Ltd) to train facilitators and lead the design of the content of the programme.

Running in 20 countries, through British Council offices, InterAction attracts leaders from diverse geographic, cultural and occupational backgrounds, who converge and work together to understand the complexity of their common challenges and explore possibilities and opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their societies. Entrepreneurs, teachers,

activists, journalists, economists, community workers, public sector workers and faith leaders – all participants are committed to seeing and facilitating positive social change and developing a new relationship between Africa and the UK.

## Countries include:

Botswana	Nigeria
Cameroon	Senegal
Eritrea	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	South Africa
Ghana	Sudan
Kenya	Tanzania
Malawi	Uganda
Mauritius	UK
Mozambique	Zambia
Namibia	Zimbabwe

Angola, Rwanda and North Africa from 2007–08



4 **InterAction promote a sense of shared African identity and equips participants with practical working tools to apply at home, in the workplace and in the community. It has created networks of people across Africa and the UK with shared hopes and values. 7**

*Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter, Impact Study*

# A programme designed for Africa – co-designed with Africans

## InterAction leadership programme partners

### British Council

The British Council builds lasting relationships between people in the UK and other countries and increases appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements.

InterAction enables the British Council to build relationships with more people in sub-Saharan Africa.

The objective is to build and maintain a network of opinion-formers, change agents and future leaders in Africa that will increasingly see the UK's commitment to Africa in a positive light and as a country worth partnering for positive social change.

The network of 930 leaders, will contribute to the creation of a new relationship between Africa and the UK. The relationship will be based on greater shared understanding, developed through the InterAction co-learning experience and professional joint working initiatives.

### QoD – Questions of Difference

The design of the InterAction programme was led by QoD working with LEAD International and a group of selected pan-African facilitators representing the many regions of Africa and the UK. The facilitation team for InterAction in Africa and the UK has been trained by QoD and are responsible for delivering the three-module programme in-country and facilitating the pan-African events.



Questions of Difference is a UK-based consulting organisation, enabling transformation through affirmatively disruptive conversations about leadership, managing differences and effecting cultural change.

**“ I feel privileged and proud to meet with other emerging leaders in Africa as well as the UK. I also feel more confident that through the InterAction Africa Leadership Programme, we could find the right path towards recognising the rich resources and untapped potentials of Africa, and the realisation that we need others even as we journey into this remarkable continent of hope, wealth and beauty. ”**

*Shannah Alusine Kandoh, Sierra Leone*

## UK and Africa – relationship change

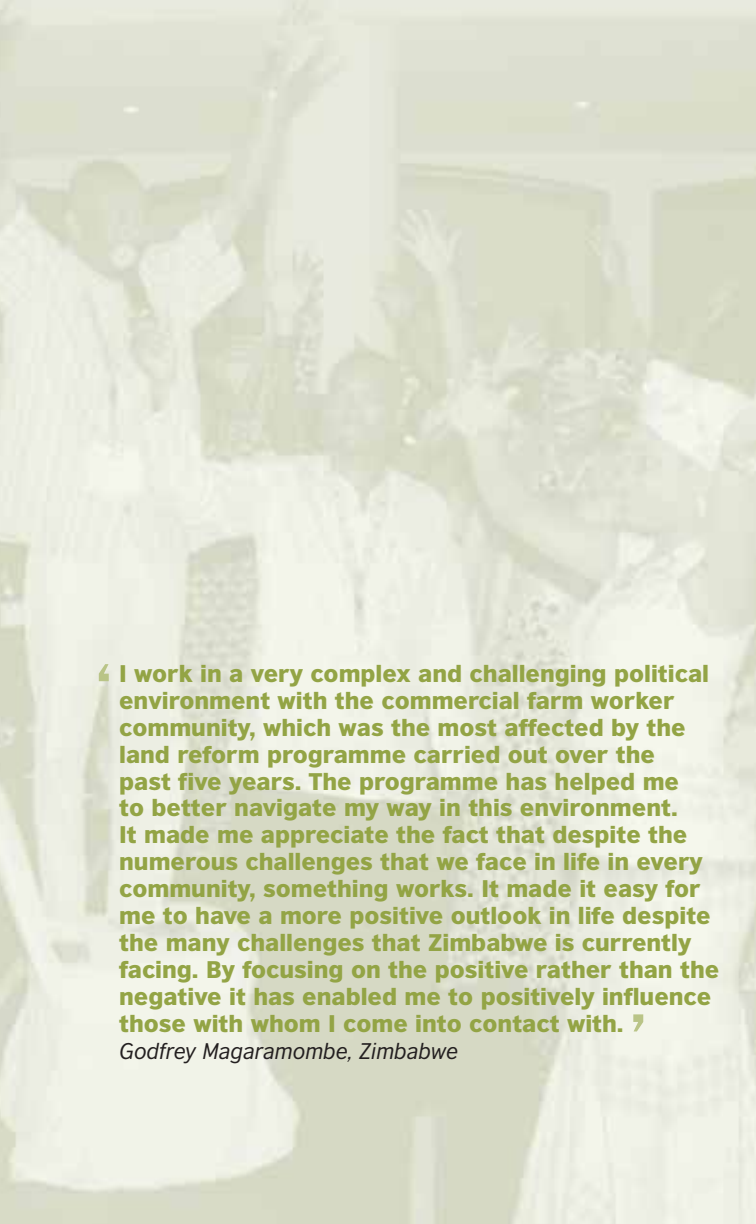
4 I had just taken a group of young people to the Live 8 concert in London and on the way home we talked about Africa, their perception on life in the UK and life in Africa. There were a lot of negative assumptions about Africa and I felt that I needed to know more myself before I could change the conversation.

I feel that my community see me as a leader, someone who has worked hard and lead by “walking the walk”. I had a strong passion for Africa but I wanted more, wanted to inspire people to make a difference though learning and I had to start that process with me.

The programme left me thinking that I have a great influence in my community and I need to question my assumptions as well as seeing how important it is to value differences. By recognising the different skills, abilities and passion people hold this enables me to start working in a way that uses the differences to enhance and build on our organisation and people within it. My passion for Africa is stronger then ever and with my new friends both in Africa and the UK I can now inform my community about the good work happening across Africa and question their assumptions both now and for the future. 7

*Sally Alden, UK*





**‘ I work in a very complex and challenging political environment with the commercial farm worker community, which was the most affected by the land reform programme carried out over the past five years. The programme has helped me to better navigate my way in this environment. It made me appreciate the fact that despite the numerous challenges that we face in life in every community, something works. It made it easy for me to have a more positive outlook in life despite the many challenges that Zimbabwe is currently facing. By focusing on the positive rather than the negative it has enabled me to positively influence those with whom I come into contact with. ’**

*Godfrey Magaramombe, Zimbabwe*

## A life-changing experience

**‘ InterAction has got to be the most important, groundbreaking thing I have done in my life, thus far. ’**

It invites participants to provide valuable input to the curriculum and learn by doing as well as from shared experiences. The programme fosters the belief that the individual is not an inert entity but an agent of change; that through considered intervention, can reshape one’s personal or professional environment.

## What’s informing the way InterAction works?

### **Appreciative inquiry**

Appreciative inquiry is the anchoring principle of the IA programme. The approach is based on the premise that ‘organisations change in the direction in which you inquire’. An organisation that inquires or focuses



on its problems will keep finding problems to focus on. An organisation that attempts to appreciate what is best about itself, will discover more and more that is good. It can then use these discoveries to build a new future, where the best becomes more common. (David L. Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, 1987)

Participants in the programme learn that reality has unlimited variations. They will recognise that there is not just one fixed and singular established procedure to effect change, but multiple ways of seeing and interpreting any given situation. Appreciative inquiry teaches the ethos and responsibility of honouring one's success, affirming that we learn most effectively from what we have done and continue to do well. This shift in thinking leads to appreciative leadership that focuses on what could be and brings out the strengths in others.

### **Principles and passions**

In addition to the eight key assumptions of appreciative inquiry, the programme has a set of principles and passions that serve as guiding precepts. These guiding precepts are offered in the belief that leaders lead

better when they are guided through principles as opposed to having fixed rules to follow. Unlike fixed rules, principles allow leaders to freely use their own intelligence and judgement.

### **Everyone is a leader**

Traditionally in Africa, leadership is perceived as exclusively political, distant and impersonal. The InterAction programme enables participants to challenge this reality by drawing attention to the fact that 'everyone is a leader'. A leader is capable of bringing about meaningful change in communities. By redirecting attention to the self, the programme enhances the capacity of participants to have an important say in effecting change regardless of their status in society. Each person can shape and transform society. The programme promotes self-recognition and fosters the idea that a leader is one who enables others to do great things – one who also engages in conversations aimed at effecting transformation for change.

**“ I was struck by how fully committed people were to the approach advocated in the programme and had taken on board appreciative inquiry, disruptive questioning and the codified InterAction principles and passions. This is a strong testament to the relevance of the InterAction programme; to the needs and experiences of Africans, and the very successful implementation of this approach through a methodology that engages and inspires participants. ”**

*Chris Tribble, King's College, UK*

## How to hold great conversations

### Conversations for change

Leaders effect change by holding great conversations, rather than telling people what to do. Great conversations help to avoid entrenchment in one's view and opens space for everyone involved. It creates room to see unexplored possibilities in the search for change. The programme offers a set of flexible tools that enhance the capacity to hold great conversations.

### Holding assumptions lightly

We all hold assumptions about other people and these assumptions can determine our attitudes and behaviours towards them. Through the programme, leaders examine their personally held assumptions, holding them 'lightly' while becoming curious about their validity.

## Art of asking powerful questions

The way questions are framed will determine the direction that people and organisations take. Questions can create different contexts and spur people to think and act differently. Leaders learn to frame questions that deepen understanding, equipping them to make the right intervention for transformation.

## See difference as a source of strength

The programme challenges the assumption that positive outcomes only emanate from sameness. It views difference not just as something that must be tolerated but as a source of strength and a catalyst for change. Participants familiarise themselves with techniques that allow them to see what each and every person offers as a function of his/her different and unique individuality.

“ Before my participation in the InterAction programme my life, thoughts, attitudes and values were almost automatic, where I was simply too lazy to re-evaluate them. The programme has taught me that “you have the option to become annoyed or independent of the cause” and I have realised, by reflecting on human relations, that people are social characters and have the freedom to change on their own and at will. ”

*Arminda Joana Zandamela, sociologist and human rights researcher, Mozambique*



## Communication

The programme challenges the standard linear model of communication. It sees communication being closer to chaos. The QoD TICing Model is an effective tool in enhancing self-awareness, providing leaders with valuable insights into personal behaviour and possible effects on others.

## Seeing conflict positively

### Understanding conflict

Working with conflict is vital. QoD challenges the myth that conflict is unnatural and negative and helps leaders to see that conflict is a natural resource from which knowledge can be drawn. To handle conflict effectively, an understanding of the conflict culture of the specific social environment and people's relationship and experience with conflict is helpful. Leaders learn about the tools that allow them to adopt a way of understanding and behaviour that enables positive interventions.

**“ I find myself being prejudicial a lot less, which is funny as I didn't realise until I participated in the programme, that I was so prejudiced. I am now beginning to realise, that whatever it is that you do in life, this can in some way be related to what is going on around the other parts of the world. There are people I met who I would never have thought would have a passion for Africa because of their individual vocations or background. This view has completely changed. ”**

*Rotimi Akinsete, UK*





4 **During the programme I realised that I had failed miserably in appreciating my son. True he was having some major challenges at school but I never “caught” him doing great things. He is known to be a wonderful sportsman and has a collection of medals to his name, yet I did not appreciate this. I was always whining about his awful German or his “lousy” maths report . . . with some coaching and some heart-to-heart conversations, his work has improved.** 7

*Aisha Allee-Mosaheb, Mauritius*

## The programme

InterAction is built around an innovative programme of peer learning, constructive dialogue and action by committed people who are passionate about Africa and the UK, their relationship, and leadership. The programme will involve one-to-one training, peer learning and a three-day pan-African conference attended by representatives from all countries to share experiences and broaden their networks with other African countries and the UK.

The programme (a total of 21 days over six months) includes a wide variety of skills, tools and techniques, which are introduced, strengthened and practiced in the programme. These include: Appreciative inquiry; Questioning, hearing and listening; Complex adaptive systems; Conflict management; Reframing; and Communication and the TICing Model. The programme outline is as follows:

- two-day selection process
- in-country one-to-one briefing to plan their own participation and personal goals
- in-country module 1 (three days) programme introduction; the guiding principles and passions



- regional pan-African event (three days); attended by over 100 delegates representing all countries; provides participants with the opportunity to share their own experiences, to learn from others, and broaden their networks to other African countries and the UK
- in-country Modules 2 and 3 (three days each); deepening understanding of Africa, leadership skills, gender mainstreaming, coaching and community practice
- participant twinning (six days); involves pairing participants, visiting and observing leadership and community dynamics.

Throughout the programme and beyond, participants will be members of a network with a dedicated website administered through British Council offices, to stay in touch with fellow participants, share knowledge and access information – [www.bc-interaction.org](http://www.bc-interaction.org).

### Currently:

- 930 leaders engaged across 19 African countries and the UK
- 30,000+ people reached across 19 countries reached in sub-Saharan Africa and the UK, through community engagements

- 1,2 and 3 InterAction workshops; available in Africa only; delivered on a cost-recovery basis or profit-for-programme.

### Who will benefit from the programme?

The categories of beneficiaries of the programme are huge. All individuals both in the public and private sector who are willing to explore new ways, innovative approaches and are ready to challenge received notions of leadership, could greatly benefit from the programme that has shown promising results across Africa and the UK.

### Notable highlights

Cameroon Cabinet: Ephraim Inoni, the Prime Minister of Cameroon, has given the British Council's InterAction programme a vote of confidence by sending over 60 senior civil servants on leadership development training, at his personal request. This is the very first InterAction event to bring civil servants into the programme, interest in which has been generated by the broader public appeal of the initiative.

‘ **The programme is practical and hands on. It doesn't put emphasis on text books and I've learned to listen with my head, my heart and my feet.** ’

*Levy Nakatana, Namibia*

### UN Economic Commission

Economic Commission for Africa- and British Council-run, one-day InterAction workshop for 150 African youth leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 2006.

### Sudan appointment

The InterAction facilitator for Sudan, Dr Samia Habbani, has just been appointed Minister for Social Affairs for Khartoum.

### Peacekeeping

Peace Direct – a UK peace and reconciliation NGO facilitated a meeting involving disparate peace-building organisations from the regions in Sudan. The British Council's InterAction network of facilitators and support from British Council Sudan were commended as central to the success of the meeting, which culminated in a launch of a new steering committee 'Collaboration for peace in Sudan', which was created and launched to the press.

## UK Africa – a new way forward

InterAction is a hugely successful leadership programme that seeks to create a new working relationship between the UK and Africa.

The network of leaders will contribute to shaping and building the relationship through a series of creative and dynamic engagements with high-level leaders in UK and Africa – demonstrating and sharing with a wider public on both continents; new thinking and new ways of leading from a new generation of African and UK leaders.



**‘ It works because it's in line with the real issues that leaders in communities in Africa deal with now. It's ultimately relevant. Also the programme is directed towards the future in engaging leaders to think about this ... third, it involves relations between people with shared visions of Africa. There'll be differences in emphasis, but that community is being built. ’**

*Barend Buys, South Africa*

## Reframing and changing mindset

Daniel works for the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform. Although he is primarily a translator, for the past year and a half he has been part of a team that is combing the Civil Service payroll to weed out frauds, ghost workers and all manner of cheats who have been swelling the wage bill and siphoning off state revenue.

I caught up with Daniel at the Rogan King's Club. The RKC is an upper-middle class joint where the Anglophone elite in the capital city, Yaounde, hang out after hours to discuss the latest news in town over a bottle of beer. At this point I challenged Daniel: 'Are you telling me that this wonderful job you are doing cleaning up our payroll is a waste of time?' This question kind of tickled Daniel's ego and pricked him to the quick. He started thawing. And so I went on to bring it home to my friends that instead of blowing

out the gloom beyond proportion all the time, we should identify, celebrate and replicate what is working. And all of us, Daniel at his payroll overhauling function, you at your police check-point, Jack at his taxation department, have to contribute to build this great nation we all see in our dreams. It is these little tweaks we make in our various communities that, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, will build up the ideal society we long for.

By this time, a few people had left; a few had looked at their watches a couple of times; a few too had asked me to punctuate the talking with a round of drinks (although I was not talking alone). But a great thing had happened: people had started reframing, changing mindset. We did not notice it on that first night, but on subsequent nights, our conversation showed that the edifice was rising. We were

seeing things differently and I was impressed to hear some of the pessimists of that first night advancing some of my arguments to convince others. The foundation of that edifice must have been laid on that first night.

Interesting how fast things are going. Of course, we have not converted the entire club. But a new group is emerging. Other club members call us 'the progressive wing' to tease us. Yes, we of the progressive wing have come to realise that there are lots of things working around us, lots of success stories we should appreciate and try to replicate. We have come to realise that it is not only those 'at the top' that have to drive the change; we all have a role to play in our respective spheres. We also have to spread the message.

Peter Terence Awa, Cameroon

“ The programme makes me want to reinvest in Africa. ”

Rinos, Zambia



# Contacts

## British Council

InterAction Programme Manager  
samantha.chuula@britishcouncil.org.zm

### Botswana

rose.nkolonyane@britishcouncil.org.bw

### Cameroon

emmanuel.ngungoh@britishcouncil.cm

### Eritrea

mesfin.habtetsion@britishcouncil.org.er

### Ethiopia

abigael.teklu@et.britishcouncil.org

### Ghana

leslie.boafo@britishcouncil.org.gh

### Kenya

gillian.fernandes@britishcouncil.or.ke

### Malawi

muthi.nhlema@britishcouncil.org.mw

### Mauritius

amme.ramdoyal@britishcouncil.org.mu

### Namibia

agnes.chitambo@britishcouncil.org.na

### Nigeria

bola.olaye@ng.britishcouncil.org

### Senegal

katharina.kane@britishcouncil.sn

### Sierra Leone

donald.williams@sl.britishcouncil.org

### South Africa

lion.phasha@britishcouncil.org.za

### Sudan

tilal.salih@sd.britishcouncil.org

### Tanzania

aluswe.mwalwega@britishcouncil.or.tz

### Uganda

rosemary.bingi@britishcouncil.org.ug

### United Kingdom

james.hampson@britishcouncil.org

### Zambia

brenda.shakele@britishcouncil.org.zm

### Zimbabwe

zanele.mukwedeya@britishcouncil.org.zw

## QoD

charlie.irvine@qod.co.uk

graeme.rainbird@qod.co.uk

QoD Office telephone number  
+44 208 883 9966

website [www.qod.co.uk](http://www.qod.co.uk)





4 **In militancy you assume that everything is wrong and must be fixed through action and dominance. But the programme helps you to understand that strength comes from taking the things that are working in a system and building on these. This is a real paradigm shift. 7**

*Jerry Muadinihamba, Namibia*



[www.bc-interaction.org](http://www.bc-interaction.org)

**QoD**  
Questions of Difference

[www.qod.co.uk](http://www.qod.co.uk)