The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and 644 million of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, with two regional hubs and four country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It belongs to the Consortium of Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Contact Information

ICRISAT-Patancheru
Headquarters
Patancheru 502 324
Andhra Pradesh, India
Tel +91 40 30713071
Fax +91 40 30713074
icrisat@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Liaison Office
CG Centers Block
NASC Complex
Dev Prakash Shastri Marg
New Delhi 110 012, India
Tel +91 11 32472306 to 08
Fax +91 11 32841294

ICRISAT-Nairobi
Regional hub EBA
PO Box 39063, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 7224550
Fax +254 20 7224001
icrisat-na@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Maputo
Regional hub WCA
BP 12404, Niamey, Niger (Via Paris)
Tel +227 20722529, 20722725
Fax +227 20734329
icrisatwca@cgiar.org

About ICRISAT

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and 644 million of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, with two regional hubs and four country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It belongs to the Consortium of Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
In this age of globalization, genetic revolution, informatization and climate change, we really need to rethink and reshape our paradigm and strategies in managing research.

Ten years ago, I joined ICRISAT at a time when the Institute was facing daunting challenges. ICRISAT was then reeling from the past, marked by low staff morale, financial challenges, and unusual turnover in its governance and senior management.

Today, ICRISAT is a fully transformed and high performing institution, a leading Center of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Servant leadership was the main ingredient of this transformation. Robert Greenleaf was indeed right when he first said in 1970 that, “servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.” At heart, the servant leader is a servant first, making a conscious decision to lead in order to serve others better, not to have dominion over them.
This is the same feeling I had when I joined ICRISAT. Coming from a farming family, I firmly believed that my mission was to serve others first in order to lead. Servant leadership was my call to transform the Institute in surmounting its tremendous challenges to serve the poorest of the poor.

Together with this, ICRISAT needed a vehicle for institutional transformation. “Science with a human face” then came about. Science is a means that ICRISAT mobilizes in order to serve the poor, and not an end in itself. Servant leadership is the main engine for ICRISAT’s transformation, propelled by science with a human face.

Related to servant leadership, let me now share the main drivers of ICRISAT’s transformation.
Institutional change made us embrace “science with a human face” as the vehicle for organizational transformation. It laid out the process of pursuing staff and institutional innovations, responsive to the rapid changes in our task environment. Business-as-usual was junked. Our governance and management team steered ICRISAT to new heights through a culture of scientific excellence, decentralization, transparency, innovative resource mobilization, knowledge sharing and communication.
In an *enabling environment*, we reconfigured the workplace so that our staff are empowered and fully developed to be productive in the organization. Towards this, we pursue innovative management policies and procedures to enable our people to work in the best conditions across our locations in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

**Team-based culture**

In our *team-based culture*, we worked under a collaborative and cooperative spirit. Along with this, we established ‘Team ICRISAT’ to serve as a social force for organizational change. Likewise, we team up with strategic partners from the public, private and civil society sectors to maintain the quality of ICRISAT’s science to benefit the poor.
Committed service

Committed service is responsible for ICRISAT’s allegiance to the poorest of the poor of the semi-arid tropics who are our main beneficiaries. ICRISAT is proud of its highly committed staff and partners, helping the Institute to move forward during challenging times.

Nurturing spirit

Our nurturing spirit involves nourishing and sustaining the commitment of our staff and partners to serve the poor. In line with this, ICRISAT devotes substantial resources towards ensuring the well being of its staff. Hence, servant leadership at ICRISAT is pursued on several fronts: proactive governance; decentralized research management; accessibility and visibility; inclusive and team-based work culture; innovative resource mobilization, communication and knowledge sharing and strategic public-private-civil society partnerships.
The ten principles of servant leadership

1. Vision and foresight

Vision enables the servant-leader to clearly see the future, way ahead of others in the organization. Foresight enables servant-leaders to understand lessons from the past, analyze realities of the present, and envision the likely consequences of a decision in the future. As visionaries, servant leaders always dream of greater heights for the organization.
Servant-leaders are good conceptualizers, seeing things at a higher level than others. They think beyond day-to-day realities and look at the organization from a broad and strategic perspective.

3. Stewardship

Servant-leaders are stewards who manage and administer what has been entrusted by others. Due to this, stewardship comes with accountability. As stewards, servant-leaders manage organizations based on the trust and confidence bestowed by their followers. Therefore, they are not organizational proprietors but manage their institutions in trust for the greater good.
General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens servant-leaders. By being highly aware of themselves, they are comfortable with their followers and clear about their likes and dislikes. At a broader level, they are sensitive about events in the task environment and their impact on the organization.

5. Listening

Conventional leaders are esteemed for their good communication and decision making skills. Servant-leaders further complement these skills by making a deep commitment to listen intently to their followers. They also continuously seek to identify and establish group consensus. Hence, they closely listen to what is being said (and not said).
Servant-leaders always seek to understand and empathize with others. They experience the same emotions that other people feel, blurring the line between self and others. This way, followers feel a sense of belongingness to the organization.

7. Persuasion

Servant-leaders use persuasion rather than authority in managing organizations. They seek to convince rather than coerce followers. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups. This principle clearly distinguishes the servant-leader from the traditional leader.
Healing is a powerful force for institutional transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the ability to heal personal feelings and human relationships. In the organization, servant-leaders use their influence to heal relationships among individual followers, groups and communities of practice.

9. Community building

Servant-leaders are community builders and harness these to make organizations as the primary molder of human lives. Towards this, they constantly seek to build coherent communities among those who work in the organization.
10. Commitment to people

Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As such, they are deeply committed to the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of each individual within the organization.

In sum, let me paraphrase Robert Greenleaf on becoming a servant leader. Servant leadership is internalized only through personal experience. In serving others first, we come to a conscious choice that creates our desire to lead. It is through the process of serving others, searching the unknown, exploring uncharted waters, growing oneself and others, listening deeply, confronting fear, healing conflicts and converting one’s failures as great learning opportunities that we become true servant leaders.

Several crises confront global agriculture today, and their confluence, if unabated, will lead to a ‘perfect storm.’ Warming temperatures, droughts, floods, increasing land degradation, loss of biodiversity, rising food and energy prices, and population explosion are creating extreme challenges to feed the world, especially the poor. Preventing
this perfect storm is the biggest challenge we will face as servant leaders of the poor and the hungry.

Based on this understanding, ICRISAT’s new Strategic Plan to 2020 focuses on harnessing markets to reduce poverty. We call this strategy IMOD, for “inclusive market-oriented development.” We see it as a dynamic progression from subsistence towards market-oriented agriculture. It starts by increasing the production of staple food crops and converting deficits into surpluses that are sold in markets.

As food security is achieved, market connections are expanded to raise incomes further through high-value crops like fruits, vegetables, export crops, industrial raw materials and other income-boosting products. Farm families have to be assisted along this pathway. Security against risks, access to inputs, stable, profitable markets, capturing a high proportion of the value chain, and access to market knowledge are key.

We must therefore team up and enhance our alliances with other servant leaders across the globe to help the poor and the hungry weather this perfect storm.

United by the principles mentioned earlier, we are confident that we will make this happen!
ICRISAT’s Transformation

2004-05
- Fourth King Baudouin Award
- Rated Superior by CGIAR
- US $30 M budget
- High staff morale
- Budget surplus (2004-2005)

2002-03
- Team ICRISAT
- Third King Baudouin Award
- External reviews
  - Quality science
  - Sound management
  - Institutional innovations
  - Budget surplus (2003)

2006-08
- New vision and strategy to 2015
- Two CGIAR Science Awards
- High staff morale
- Rated Outstanding by CGIAR twice
- Fifth King Baudouin Award
- US $50 M budget (2008)
- Sixth year of budget surplus (2008)

2009-2010
- US $52 M budget (2009)
- Strategic Plan to 2020
- CGIAR Outstanding partnership Award with AVRDC
- Seventh year of budget surplus

Mid 90s:
- Financial and human resource challenges
- Declining support

2000-01
- Institutional transformation through Science with a Human Face
- Grey to Green Revolution
- US $22 M budget
The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and 644 million of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, with two regional hubs and four country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It belongs to the Consortium of Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Contact Information

ICRISAT-Patancheru (Headquarters)
Patancheru 502 324
Andhra Pradesh, India
Tel +91 40 30713071
Fax +91 40 30713074
icrisat@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Liaison Office
CG Centers Block
NASC Complex
Dev Prakash Shanti Marg
New Delhi 110 012, India
Tel +91 11 32472306 to 08
Fax +91 11 324841294

ICRISAT-Bulawayo
Matopos Research Station
PO Box 776
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Tel +263 222311 to 15
Fax +263 383 307
icrisatZW@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Nairobi
(Royal hub EBA)
PO Box 39063, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 7224550
Fax +254 20 7224001
icrisat-nairobi@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Lilongwe
Chiradze Agricultural Research Station
PO Box 1096
Lilongwe, Malawi
Tel +265 1 707297, 071, 067, 057
Fax +265 1 707298
icrisat-malawi@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Maputo
c/o IIAM, Av. das FPLM No 2698
Caixa Postal 1906
Maputo, Mozambique
Tel +258 21 461657
Fax +258 21 461681
icrisatMOZ@panintra.com

About ICRISAT

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and 644 million of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.

ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, with two regional hubs and four country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It belongs to the Consortium of Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Contact Information

ICRISAT-Patancheru (Headquarters)
Patancheru 502 324
Andhra Pradesh, India
Tel +91 40 30713071
Fax +91 40 30713074
icrisat@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Liaison Office
CG Centers Block
NASC Complex
Dev Prakash Shanti Marg
New Delhi 110 012, India
Tel +91 11 32472306 to 08
Fax +91 11 324841294

ICRISAT-Bulawayo
Matopos Research Station
PO Box 776
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Tel +263 222311 to 15
Fax +263 383 307
icrisatZW@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Nairobi
(Royal hub EBA)
PO Box 39063, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 7224550
Fax +254 20 7224001
icrisat-nairobi@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Lilongwe
Chiradze Agricultural Research Station
PO Box 1096
Lilongwe, Malawi
Tel +265 1 707297, 071, 067, 057
Fax +265 1 707298
icrisat-malawi@cgiar.org

ICRISAT-Maputo
c/o IIAM, Av. das FPLM No 2698
Caixa Postal 1906
Maputo, Mozambique
Tel +258 21 461657
Fax +258 21 461681
icrisatMOZ@panintra.com

www.icrisat.org

Aug 2010

Servant Leadership
A People-Centered Paradigm of Research Management

William D Dar
Director General, ICRISAT