Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

The initial idea for this book emerged in early 2015. It came from a reaction against common stereotypes of leaders in Africa, where political leaders and dictators have come to stand for all African leaders. Contrary to this stereotype, in organizations and businesses all over Africa, senior leaders and increasingly young leaders are full of ambition and drive, wanting to make a difference, inspire others, and be a different, "new" type of leader. This volume looks at leaders and leadership experience in Africa outside of the context of politics. We illustrate the diversity of "new" leaders in Africa, their aspirations and ideas for a different future, and how they handle the complex contexts in which they operate.

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Many young leaders lack support: they do not have readily available role models, support, or spaces to put their ideas into practice. Very few young leaders in Africa get a chance to participate in Leadership Development programmes. We set out to document how operational leaders in Africa perceive their role, the challenges they experience, and how they operate effectively as leaders. Our research focuses in particular on the perceptions and experiences of leaders in an age of innovation and transformation.

Out of the 54 African countries, we selected five case study countries in sub-Saharan Africa, two in West Africa—Nigeria and Ghana—and three in East Africa—Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda. See Fig. 1.1 showing these countries on the map of Africa.
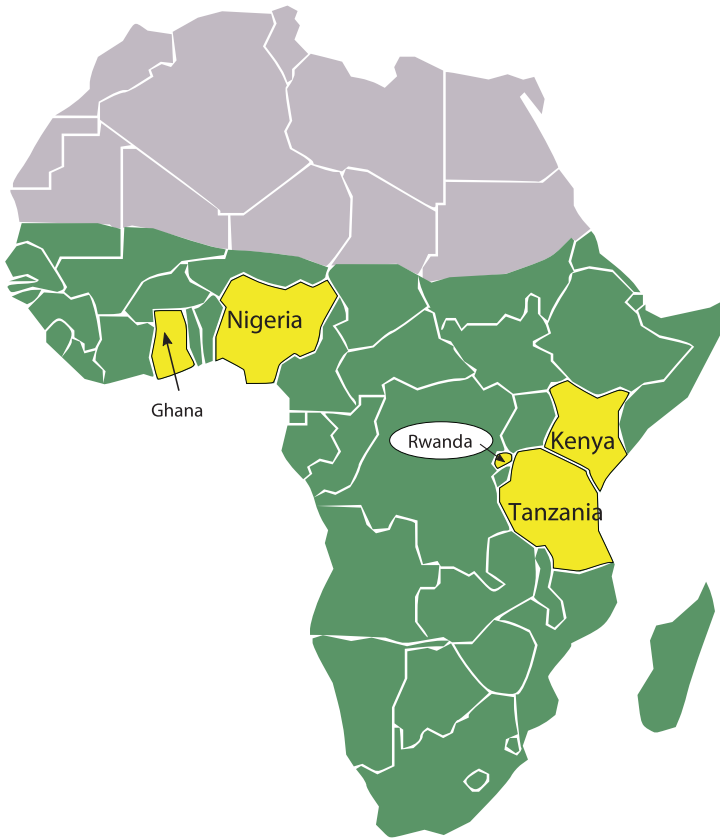

Fig. 1.1   Map of Africa showing our five case study countries marked in yellow

We also wanted to include a range of leadership contexts, from both a national perspective and an organizational/sector perspective, and to gather the viewpoints of senior and young leaders. Our five case studies focus on the following:

- Leadership in science in Ghana
- Leadership in business in Nigeria
- Leading across the generations in Tanzania
- Leadership in the private sector in Kenya
- Leadership in rural development in Rwanda

Needless to say, these case studies can only provide a snapshot of leadership in the vast continent of Africa, with so many countries and sectors. However, our aim has been to gain rich insights, probing as deeply as possible into the range of experiences and viewpoints of different people within any one context, and then to explore what similarities and differences exist across the various contexts. Our selection of these leadership contexts was partially opportunistic, but also driven by theoretical considerations to acknowledge the diversity of this continent. Our aim is to support the development of the next generation of leaders across Africa, hoping that the documented experiences can serve as examples for young leaders.

Part I, "Foundations", comprises three conceptual chapters. Chapter 2, "Global Leadership: Key Concepts and Frameworks", provides an overview of key concepts and frameworks relating to global leadership. It starts by exploring definitions of leadership and then considers in turn four key elements of leadership: leaders, followers, purpose, and context. Chapter 3, "Leadership in Africa: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives", explores the historical/political context of leadership in Africa, looking at cultural and social diversity, as well as the changing political, economic, and demographic contexts that allow the reader to understand the broader picture of the action of leaders in the five case study countries. Of particular note, in these five countries, age stands out as a dividing line on how people understand and want leadership to be. Chapter 4, "Understanding Historical, Political, and Demographic Context of Leadership in Africa", presents a review of the more recent literature on leadership in Africa, identifies gaps, and builds a framework for understanding the case studies. Our study aims to respond to the identified gaps, notably producing case

studies of diverse African leaders, describing their personal experiences and leadership journeys, including their successes and challenges.

Part II presents our empirical studies and findings. It starts with a methodology chapter, Chap. 5, which describes the *research methodology* used when conducting the case studies and follow-up survey. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 present our five case studies. Chapter 6, "Young Leaders Transforming Science in Ghana", focuses on leadership in science and presents the case study findings from Ghana. Chapter 7, "Leadership and Culture in Corporate Organizations in Nigeria", focuses on leadership in business and presents the case study findings from Nigeria. Chapter 8, "Bridging the Generation Gap: Perceptions of Leadership by Senior and Young Leaders in Tanzania", focuses on age and the generation gap and presents the case study findings from Tanzania. Chapter 9, "Changing Leadership Perceptions: Leaders in the Private Sector in Kenya", focuses on leadership in the private sector and presents the case study findings from Kenya. Lastly Chap. 10, "Emerging People-Oriented Leadership in Rural Development in Rwanda", focuses on leadership in rural development and presents the case study findings from Rwanda. Part II concludes with Chap. 11, "Leadership Development Needs and Experiences: Survey Findings", which reports the findings from our Africa wide survey.

In Part III we consider the implications and applications of what has emerged from our research. Chapter 12, "Understanding Leadership and Its Development in Africa", draws conclusions based on the empirical data collected and formulates the implications and applications of our findings. We focus on the "how": how African leaders could develop leadership skills in an era of transformation.

Our research demonstrates that there is a diversity of "new" leaders—young as well as senior, female as well as male. Many are transformative, flexible, struggling, or successful, and all are determined.

In the era of globalization, there is an increasing need to offer guidance on how leaders can adjust their leadership style to suit situational contexts. This book illustrates to scholars and leaders how leadership can be developed and contributes to the fostering of a new community of leaders, integrating cutting-edge knowledge on Leadership Development in Africa.