

Take me to your leader

When leaders fail, we all suffer. But LSE's growing range of master's programmes can offer vital leadership skills to mid-career professionals, argues **Sue Onslow**.

Discussion about leadership – or the lack of it – has been much in the news recently, whether it be the News International scandal rocking the Murdoch empire, the stand-off between the Turkish political and military hierarchy, Nick Clegg's leadership of the Liberal Democrats versus grass-roots opinion, Obama's presidency and US congressional opinion, or the challenges confronting the post-Gaddafi Libyan leaders.

The agonising deficit drama on Capitol Hill in July and August culminated in a plan that left few American leaders with their credibility and influence intact. Yet the basis of the final financial fudge was established through classic negotiation skills – lines of communication, regular talks during negotiations, personal relationships and compromise to establish common ground to win bipartisan support. Team selection and management were paradoxically both stumbling blocks and the solution. As the impasse on Capitol Hill proved, leadership skills require managing up as well as down to create that necessary positive working environment.

When business and political leaders fail to achieve their goals, the fallout in today's media-conscious world is massive. Thus leaders in the limelight grope for quick-fix successful models, sometimes applying

lessons gleaned from elsewhere in unique or radically different circumstances. National cultural diversity affects organisational behaviour. Generational formative experiences are also a factor in the

equation. Ideas matter either more or less. The one constant lesson is that leadership skills and the ability to appraise and apply the right solutions to a crisis are essential. And, to paraphrase the former prime minister Tony Blair – communication, communication, communication.

These are all qualities that LSE seeks to cultivate with its expanding range of executive master's programmes for mid-career professionals. Because we can educate individuals who have already reached a level of success and influence in their careers, LSE is further enriched by an experienced cadre of professional students who contribute their own perspectives and insights to our learning community.

Whether the issue is "the Asian miracle", "the Arab Spring", stabilising the European Union or understanding the global financial crisis, LSE faculty are at the forefront of productive analysis and debate. Since LSE was set up in 1895 to improve society and to understand root causes of societal issues, the spirit of constructive critical analysis is at the heart of our teaching, research and global activity today.

LSE's executive degrees don't pretend to have all the answers – but they encourage students to ask the right questions and enhance our already rich network of socially and globally conscious scholars. ■



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The courses draw upon LSE's peerless internal intellectual resources and external contacts to provide students with up-to-date perspectives on the latest developments in global business and finance, law, politics and political economy, healthcare management, international relations, social and public policy. We teach how to think critically, rather than sell a limited toolkit that is only valid for the time spent in the classroom.

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