Building Community Leaders

MENTOR'S GUIDE

Prepared by Randall S. Peterson

Welcome to the Building Community Leaders Programme! Your thoughtful guidance and support for community leaders will make a great impact. As you to help others learn about leadership, you will learn some new ideas from the potential community leaders you will be working with. Read the rest of this guide carefully as you prepare for your task of exploring ideas of leadership with them. The curriculum is set out in seven workbooks:

1. Understanding my Traits

2. Reading the Situation

3. Mastering the Organization

4. Appreciating Power

5. Seeing the Vision

6. Acting with Ethics

7. Reflecting on Action

The workbooks are intended for potential community leaders of any age or ability, a participant should begin with workbook 1 (Understanding my Traits) and work through workbook 7 (Reflecting on Action). The content of each workbook builds on the previous one.

Each workbook has 19 activities, all planned around the experiential learning model. On the front of each page are activities (Action), and on the back are reflections (Reflection), which encourage the participant to think about draw conclusions from the activity and apply them in their community role and everyday life. Be sure to work through the entire sequence of questions (1-8).

**Your Role**

As mentor, you will be expected to advise the participants on their leadership experiences, help them process the lessons learnt on the course and to assimilate this in their experience as community leaders and in everyday life. To do this you will need to schedule and keep regular appointments with the person you are mentoring (say once a month). In addition you may be asked to attend training sessions. If you are unable to meet this commitment please contact the course organizer.

As mentor you are expected to:

1. **Be a role model;** act so that the person you are mentoring will respect you and the way you behave.
2. **Be a friend:** help and support the person you are mentoring “over and above” the minimum” give them moral support and tell them when they are doing a good job.
3. **Be a reality tester:** listen and give honest feedback to the person you are mentoring.
4. **Be a good listener:** really listen to what the person says and how and why they are saying it, do they really want advice or just for you to listen?
5. **Be an observer:** attend some of the participants meetings or events.
6. **Be available:** have enough time to do a good job. If you are needed make an effort to be there.

If you have questions about your role or responsibilities please ask the course organizer. Good luck in the vitally important role you will be playing.

# **Why leadership**

The call for leadership is one of the constant themes of our time. But what is leadership and who are our leaders? John Gardner, former Director of the Carnegie Corporation and Secretary of Health Education, and Welfare in the Kennedy administration, is often asked to speak to community groups and begins by asking: "Who are today's leaders?"

Often, the audience answers with "the President, the Rockefellers, the Fords, the Kennedys!" Gardner's response is: "Oh, my friends, you are so far from the truth When you think of leaders, you should think of yourselves. You are the people who are out in the community, rubbing elbows to make things happen, You are the leaders of today!"

We agree! Leaders are not only the political figures making headlines. Leadership is not achieved through some mysterious process. Leadership happens every day in your community! Leadership development is important because it changes lives and communities.

**The Building Community Leaders Course**

This leadership curriculum is designed to enable participants to "learn by doing" through experiential learning. Experiential learning happens when a person is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity. The cycle is continuous.

Activities in each workbook will require people to interact, analyze, question, reflect, and transfer. The activity comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created as a result of the experience.

This learning must be transferred into the participant’s role in the community and experience of everyday life, by reflecting on and changing behaviour. The participant needs to cooperate actively and the mentor guides them to use his/her intelligence. Learning becomes a cooperative enterprise.

As mentor you will also need to keep in contact with the course organizer, but remember your conversations with the participant are confidential unless you are specifically asked by the participant to feedback a message.