Building Community Leaders

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Prepared by Randall S. Peterson

Welcome to the Building Community Leaders Programme! This course is designed to help you learn about leadership and apply the ideas you learn in your role in the community and everyday life. Read the rest of this guide carefully as you prepare for your task of exploring ideas of leadership.

**The Importance of Learning about Leadership**

Leaders are essential at every level in society. They are not just the politicians and other people in the news, they are people just like you who are trying to work with others to solve problems and make the neighbourhood a better place to live in and to help communities achieve their goals. As Eleanor Roosevelt said

*“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”*

Such leadership does not mean setting yourself above other people but giving yourself a better chance of helping them by making a difference to the world. This course is designed to help you to learn from your actions and experiences to develop yourself and your skills in leadership.

**The Big Picture**

Robert W. Terry in his book “Authentic leadership: Courage in action” (San Francisco Jossey-Bass 1993) identifies six ways most people view leadership, each is covered by a workbook designed to help you experience and understand the view of leadership

1. **Understanding my Traits:** Leadership is a product of your personality and traits you were born with.

2. **Reading the Situation:** Leadership arises from the situation you find yourself in which determines how you should behave as a leader.

3**. Mastering the Organization:** Leadership is defined as making things happen in and through an organization.

4. **Appreciating Power:** Leadership is the power to get things done.

5**. Seeing the Vision:** Leadership is about having and communicating vision for the future.

6**. Acting with Ethics:** Leaders act ethically, demonstrating and setting values.

In addition to these six ways of viewing leadership Robert Terry puts forward a seventh view:

7. **Reflecting on Action:** Reflective leadership is the courage to act on what you believe and the ability to use the skills of the other six views.

**How the Programme Works**

Each workbook has 19 activities, all planned to help you learn from structured experiences. On the front of each page are activities (Action), and on the back are reflections (Reflection), which encourage you to think about draw conclusions from the activity and apply them in your community role and everyday life. To get the best from the course you should

* Attend meetings to discuss activities and lessons you draw from them
* Carry out the activities in the workbook individually or in groups.
* Undertake a role in a community organization or group.
* Discuss with your mentor the lessons you learnt and how this applies to your role in the community organization and everyday life.

You should help your organizer to ensure that the activity and reflection are relevant to you. That you understand what you are asked to do and what you are intended to learn. This may mean adapting the experience to provide the same lesson but with different examples that are easier for you to relate to.

You should help your mentor to understand how you are applying the lessons you learn to your role in a community organization and everyday life. Of course in real life you do not deal with one aspect at a time so you may need to simplify and take a narrow view at first but as you progress you should be able to take a fully rounded view of the course experience and of your experience of working with others in a community organization.

Good luck in learning about leadership and enjoy the experience.