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## BRIEF LESSONS ON LEADERSHIP

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*This brief was prepared to help sites participating in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Pre-Birth through Age Three Initiative consider leadership supports necessary to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers and their families. Its purpose was to facilitate discussion on contemporary leadership issues at a design conference - it is not a comprehensive review of the subject matter. For additional information on leadership, refer to materials cited in this brief, CAPD's publications and links to other organizations.*

As more citizens - in terms of numbers and diversity - become involved in public affairs, society has had to struggle with long-held notions of leadership.

Although civic involvement is not new, recently there has been a recognition that the efforts of many residents in communities across this country which aim to improve the quality of life for children and families is, in fact, leadership. And it is this collaborative form of leadership that has successfully led to political and systemic change in several cities.

The changing face of leadership requires new and innovative ways for recruiting and preparing diverse segments of the community for this emerging culture of shared power and decision-making. To stimulate thinking and discussion on these issues, below is a sample of citations and resources regarding leadership and civic engagement as it relates to community-building and change.

### GENERAL COMMENTS ON LEADERSHIP

*Building Diverse Communities.* Pew Partnership for Civic Change, Fall 1995.

- Leaders aren't born, they are made.
- Leadership is a cultural phenomenon; there is no recipe or formula. It must be created anew and for specific participants and their needs.

- Leadership development programs are a viable means of building coalitions to work for community change.

*Building Healthy Communities.* Pew Partnership for Civic Change, Winter 1995.

- Old leadership models [top-down and linear] no longer exist - our society is more diverse and our problems are more complicated. Collaborative leadership is the new hope. This means involving leaders from diverse sectors. However, this is hard - it takes time and commitment from many grassroots leaders.
- Each community needs forums for business, civic and community groups to come together to share concerns and vision; each needs a leadership organization to prepare up-and-coming leaders for challenges; each needs a new way of thinking about how to do business - to commit to collaborative leadership.
- Getting people who disagree in a room together is the prerequisite for change.

### GENERAL INFORMATION IN THE DESIGN OF LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

*Additional Thoughts on the Evaluation of Eureka Communities.* CAPD, October 1996.

- The literature suggests that leadership can be learned. Different learning methods may be more suitable for different people. For example, for those who have some knowledge in the area of interest, have a strong interest and need to acquire the learning and have skill in being a learner, more informal, experiential programs may work best (i.e., peer exchange, etc.). More formal, didactic programs may work best for participants who have less

## Brief Lessons on Leadership (continued)

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knowledge of the subject matter. However, a mix of teaching/training methods may be best.

### PARENT LEADERSHIP

*The Children's First Initiative: Observations and Emerging Lessons from Early Work.* CAPD, April 1998.

- Parents are leaders; they want funding to organize, take on leadership positions and training supports to do their work.
- There are multiple ways to organize parents of very young children. They include as first teachers of their children, but also as consumers of public and private services (i.e., child care, health care, education, etc.) and as voters who control resources and community leadership.
- Supporting the development and growth of parent-run organizations (in addition to collaborations of which parents are a part) may be a useful strategy to increase parent leadership.
- There may be particular points where parents will welcome additional training and/or educational opportunities - perhaps after they have done some organizing and leadership work on their own.

*Making Room at the Table: Fostering Family Involvement in the Planning and Governance of Formal Support Systems.* Family Resource Coalition of America, 1997

- Collaboration between families and professionals in program and policy settings is a concept that requires all parties to acquire new skills. It also requires changes in attitudes and facilitating parent/family involvement in new ways.

### Examples of Parent Leadership Programs

1. Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI). Hartford, Connecticut

PLTI seeks to enable parents to become leading advocates for children. Parents, selected through a competitive process, are taught, among other things, how to work with diversity, define needs, assess and define problems, speak publicly, review child and family data, plan agendas and understand

person history and its impact on self-image and empowerment. Parents are offered three phases of training including a retreat, a 10-week course on parent leadership and a 10-week study of politics, policy and media with a practicum to practice the learning together within a community framework.

Contact: The Commission on Children, (860) 240-0290.

2. ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence Program (APEX), Washington, D.C.

APEX, sponsored by ASPIRA, reaches out to Latino parents who desire to become involved in their children's education but may not know where to start. The main goals of APEX are to train parents to improve education in their communities, become advocates for their children and to help them mobilize other parents to join these efforts. APEX is located in five cities - Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami, New York City and Newark. Workshops in Spanish and English include self-esteem building, school structure, the importance of communication, organizing parent networks and becoming an effective facilitator. Graduates of the program conduct additional trainings with new parents. APEX parents have been elected to local councils and many serve on various parent leadership committees.

Contact: Julia Howell Barros, ASPIRA, (202) 835-3600.

### COMMUNITY/INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

*Lessons Regarding Community Organizing and Leadership Development for Public Housing Residents.* Prepared for The Annie E. Casey Foundation by CAPD, February 1997.

- It is important to address the relationships between community organizing and leadership. Organizing must happen before people can take on leadership roles and responsibilities.
- Organizing is a way to engage residents, build their trust and confidence, build relationships and identify natural leaders. It is also a process to identify community needs and resources and strategies to meet needs.

- Relationship or trust-building with public housing residents is a slow, incremental process. The process has to overcome significant resident misgivings or distrust of new initiatives.
  - Successful organizing strategies that overcome barriers to resident participation and involvement include meeting with residents individually at their homes or in places where they are comfortable; showing them how organizing can be helpful to them; being consistent, sincere and respectful; breaking through intimidation barriers by talking to them in “common language” and having a long-term presence in the community.
  - Community organizing is a good means to continuously build leadership capacity among the community. This helps to ensure that the efforts can persist in the absence of its original leader.
  - In order to take on leadership roles, residents must have a good understanding of how power is distributed in the ecology of institutions. This suggests the need to provide residents with information and education about the organizations and agencies that affect public housing and how these major systems work.
- Building Diverse Communities.* Pew Partnership for Civic Change, Fall 1995.

- Community leadership programs can help two categories of leaders - those with considerable leadership experience who see themselves as leaders (it can help hone their skills and broaden their circle of contacts and alliances), as well as quiet community members who usually stay away from leadership positions. This is where leadership programs can have the most profound effect - ordinary community members who want to get involved will be better equipped to participate in community affairs.
- Steps necessary to the process of community leadership development include having an appropriate, inclusive leadership mechanism; coming to an understanding of the power of collective leadership and group effort and being able to identify community leaders.

- The basis of a community leadership program may be skill building (in the areas of coalition building; research; analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; building public support of a plan; consensus decision-making and effective communication skills) principles and concepts of leadership, personal reflection and action planning.
- Programs may benefit participants if they include issue-related skills development so that participants learn the necessary “systems” language and how to make official procedures work for them.
- Community leadership development must focus on developing a team of leaders, not just on training individuals. Team building, group work and collaboration are at the heart of these programs.
- Leadership development trainers and educators must become facilitators and collaborators with those in the leadership development program. Their role is to help collect and analyze data; help organize presentations and to assist in community organizing.
- Community leadership development programs aimed at achieving real change must incorporate strategies that both oppose threats to the community, but also offer alternatives aimed at building-up and edifying the community.

### Examples of Community Leadership Programs

3. Community Leadership Project (CLP). Pomfret, Connecticut.

The mission of CLP is to help people at the grass-roots level develop the confidence and leadership skills needed to work collaboratively with others to solve problems and build communities. The program is offered through community colleges and non-profit agencies and targets individuals likely to be excluded from traditional power structures by virtue of class, race, gender or other factors. Leadership skills covered in the curriculum include how to conduct meetings, how to lead open-ended discussions and how to resolve conflicts.

Contact: CLP, PO Box 203, 697A Pomfret St. Pomfret, CT 06258.

4. Other Community Leadership Programs:

- Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association, Cleveland, OH
- Community Training and Assistance Center, Boston, MA
- Los Angeles Community Design Center
- Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations, Philadelphia, PA
- Organizing and Leadership Training Center, Boston, MA

5. Partial List of National Organizations to Support Local Community Leadership:

- The Center for Community Change, Washington, D.C.
- ACORN, Washington, D.C.
- National Low-Income Housing Coalition, Washington, D.C.
- Grassroots Leadership Institute, Charlotte, NC.
- National Training and Information Center of National People's Action, Chicago, IL.

LEADERSHIP OF SYSTEMS (COMMUNITY NON-PROFITS, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS)

*An Evaluation Design for Eureka Communities.* CAPD, August 1995.

- In general, the evaluation of leadership development programs has been sparse. Of those we could identify, most focused on whether individuals achieved certain competencies - those related to the outcomes that the program was designed to meet. However, there is little use of standard outcome measures to assess leadership programs.
- Leadership development programs for non-profit executives share a goal of changing conditions in communities by investing in the capacity of leaders and potential leaders of organizations. However, they vary on a number of dimensions including level of intensity, participation expected from organ-

izations that sponsor participants, time and resource commitment expected of participants, type of training provided (experiential vs. formal), comprehensiveness of programming (including follow-up activities or other components of development beyond training) and target of intervention (level or position within an organization).

- One distinct difference among leadership programs is the extent to which they emphasize individual development within the context of a larger organization. Programs that target individuals within the context of institutions are generally designed to build the capacity of individuals and organizations simultaneously. These programs do not require individuals to take a leave of absence from their organization. On the other hand, programs that solely emphasize individual development generally do not focus on the institution - as such, they often utilize strategies which take individuals out of their environment for training and are more time intensive (full-time).

*On Leadership.* John Gardner, 1990.

- Tasks of leadership in non-profit organizations include (these may be interpreted as skills necessary of non-profit leaders and, as such, the focus of leadership development programs):
  - envisioning goals;
  - affirming values through regeneration;
  - motivating individuals;
  - managing;
  - achieving workable unity;
  - developing trust in people;
  - explaining and teaching to others;
  - serving as a symbol or representing a group;
  - renewing the commitment of others to vision and goals; and
  - enabling and empowering others.

*Building Diverse Communities*. Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Fall 1995.

- Community leadership programs can be a mechanism to show political leaders how to be more accessible to citizens.

### Examples of System Leadership Programs

#### 6. W.K. Kellogg Foundation National Fellowship Program, Michigan

This program aims to identify early-career professionals with leadership potential and prepares them to address major social issues in the United States and beyond. The Fellowship consists of a series of seminars, an individual learning plan, small-group activities, cross-group seminars and biennial forums for those who have completed the fellowship.

#### 7. National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations, Washington, D.C.

This program is designed to provide additional skills to mid-career professionals working on Hispanic health issues. The program includes a four-week summer program and participation in health advocacy projects. Fellows come together in Washington at the end of every year to discuss projects, testify on Capitol Hill and advocate in other ways.

#### 8. Eureka Communities. Washington, D.C.

The mission of Eureka Communities is to help community-based non-profit organizations individually and jointly better serve children, youth and families. To do so, Eureka provides leadership support and assistance to executives within these organizations in four communities - Detroit, Los Angeles, San Diego and the Bay Area (San Francisco and Oakland). The program is supported by a Community Director in each site who assists each Eureka Fellow in identifying their learning goals and designing a developmental experience to meet them. Fellows benefit from two week-long "study trips" to Mentor agencies across the country and participate in various convenings in their own community to exchange with their peers. One-on-one technical assistance may be provided by the Community Director or Fellows in the community.