

APPLIED LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE COALITIONS

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February 14, 2001

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Council on Disability (NCD) wishes to express its sincere appreciation to Susan Madison, NCD's 2000 policy fellow, for her initiative, perseverance, and leadership in developing this document. A special thank you is extended to the members of the NCD Policy Team for their supportive roles of initial review, comments, and suggestions. We also express thanks to Edward J. Heaton, NCD 2001 policy fellow, and the members of the NCD Executive Committee for assistance with the final review.

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BACKGROUND

"You can only lead others where you yourself are willing to go."

Lachlan McLean

This guide is designed to assist readers who are interested in promoting leadership development and coalition building. The need for this guide, with resources, grew out of a National Council on Disability (NCD) sponsored meeting among people from diverse cultures in May 2000. Whether the reader's purpose is to obtain information on the design or redesign of leadership development and coalition building efforts for use with people from diverse cultural groups or with a broader population, the premises in this guide may prove to be invaluable tools for promoting a more inclusive society.

During May 18–20, 2000, NCD hosted Think Tank 2000: Advancing the Civil and Human Rights of People with Disabilities from Diverse Cultures to bring people with disabilities from diverse cultures together with members of national civil rights organizations to find common ground and generate priorities for an action plan. The purpose of the action plan was to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities from diverse cultures across our nation. A call for action was based upon decades of documented findings that the relative gains realized by the larger population of people with disabilities were not shared by all.

The summary paper from the Think Tank 2000 discusses the importance of consensus among committed groups as "turning talk into actions" and building coalitions from the bottom up. Barriers included: people with disabilities from diverse cultures are not able to speak with one voice and unable to join in a coalition to advocate for a common cause. Among the three working groups into which participants were divided, one group's recommendation was the development of this guide on promising practices for coalition building. Consensus on this recommendation was reached by the majority of all

participants. Other recommendations included: establishing a mentoring program within the disability rights community and in concert with, the civil and human rights communities to train emerging leaders from diverse cultures, developing internships for young people at disability and civil rights organizations, and providing training in how to be an organizer.

This guide is designed to cultivate leadership development and coalition building across diverse cultures and disability with the hopes that we will continue to find common ground. The Think Tank 2000 participants reported that establishing and maintaining the voice of people from diverse cultures with disabilities was an overarching matter of leadership development. They also thought that in addition to leadership, coalition building and political know-how were required.

The organization of this guide begins with information for building awareness of key definitions and concepts. It also includes strategies that have been successful in leadership development and coalition building, and introduces the reader to fundamental philosophical shifts that are needed to enhance these efforts. A key proposal is a change from top-down leadership to group-centered leadership and from a hierarchal mode of operations to adoption of a stewardship attitude. Since the disability movement lags behind other established civil rights movements and correspondingly lacks the experience and documentation of leadership and coalition, this guide looks to what has worked for these movements. The Resource section at the end offers examples to assist those who are interested in promoting leadership development and coalition building upon which to build. The reader is encouraged to use the content of this handbook as a viable point of departure and to move beyond what is currently available to what can be. It is, therefore, a beginning rather than an end.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“Nothing is so potent as the silent influence of a good example.”

James Kent

Leadership development programs are gaining in popularity and usually recognize the importance of both inner skills and interpersonal skills. The traditional view of “leading” others because they may not be able to lead is shifting to one based on shared power and community building. A leader can be anyone, regardless of position, who serves as an effective social change agent. Leadership development must empower individuals, and help people develop talents and attitudes that will enable them to become social change agents.

What are some key components of leadership development? Leadership development in this paradigm is not a commodity to deliver. It is a perspective and a way of thinking. It is vision driven and value based. It is *“not leadership from any one person that is required, it is an aspect of leadership each of us summons from within,”* John Nirenberg (1993).

Leadership requires self-development; meaning assessment of one’s strengths as well as one’s weaknesses and understanding one’s values, motivations and passions. The ability to understand oneself requires development of reflection and integrity. The outer or interpersonal development requires relationship building through empathy and inclusion and the ability to understand others. Leadership development is both an inner and an outer journey, with the inner being the most difficult. *“Knowing who you are is a key to successful leadership growth,”* Roger Sublett, Director, Kellogg National Leadership Program.

What characteristics are associated with successful leaders? Communication skills, such as the ability to listen, are a priority. In addition, good intercultural communication and non-verbal communication are essential. In the larger context, conflict resolution and the ability to be a follower are also attributes. Risk taking is essential as it is to all successes. Increased self-confidence, which is a natural outcome of skill building and leadership development, allows for growth and particularly the taking of risks. This in turn leads to expanded vision and greater self-exploration, both inherent characteristics of a good leader.

Generally, leadership is defined by the following characteristics:

- _ Fosters change
- _ Value-based
- _ Recognizes all people are potential leaders
- _ Understands leadership is a group process
- _ Fosters continual learning
- _ Creativity
- _ Flexibility
- _ Resilience and Vision.

Examples of Programs and Concepts to Enhance Leadership Development

One program at Monmouth University is entitled Integrated Leadership and Social Responsibility. It teaches the following: awareness of systems and tolerance for ambiguity, collaborative problem solving skills, interaction with people from diverse cultures, the identification of a community beyond the self, a commitment to the power of groups to effect decisions and an understanding of cultural diversity and inequalities among groups.

To address intercultural understanding, the Leadership Development Institute at the University of Detroit Mercy brings students from different cultural backgrounds to enter into partnerships with diverse community leaders encouraging community responsibility.

Another program unites leadership concepts with practical applications. It is called Servant Leadership as written by Robert Greenleaf. Often, hands-on learning is more effective than texts or classroom lessons. It is based on the premise that the leader's purpose is to serve the interests and goals of others. Therefore, it is not the traditional or old way of directing others but the ability to provide others with a model of character. It is the show me-don't tell me model. In this case, leadership is an example.

*In *The Servant as Leader* by Robert Greenleaf, he states, "The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first...the difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; or do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous...?"*

Larry C. Spears from *Servant Leadership: Quest for Caring Leadership* gives 10 characteristics of servant leadership:

- _ Listening
- _ Conceptualization
- _ Empathy
- _ Healing
- _ Stewardship
- _ Awareness
- _ Building Community
- _ Persuasion
- _ Commitment to the growth of people.

Peter Block, who wrote *Stewardship: Putting Service Ahead of Self-Interest*, uses stewardship to replace leadership to keep his focus on the next generation and to help us advance our concepts about control and compliance in relation to leadership. Block also argues for a redistribution of power. *“Our search for strong leadership in others, expresses a desire for others to assume the ownership and responsibility...the effect is to localize power, purpose, and privilege in the one we call leader,”* states Block. Instead, he calls for a balance of power and a commitment to the larger community.

Mentoring or modeling helps one acquire leadership skills or learn new behaviors through observing others. Modeling occurs each and every day in the way we conduct ourselves. As the old saying goes, *“What you do speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you are saying.”* Mentoring programs can be established within schools, government offices and/or faith groups. They can be formal as with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs or informal where one person provides time, support and assistance to another. One leader can mentor another. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey suggests integrating leadership by giving what we have learned, sharing, and teaching someone else.

In October 2000, the White House Office of Public Liaison partnered with the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities, the American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD), and others to sponsor a mentoring day for people with disabilities who were matched with various federal government offices. This National Disability Mentoring Day is part of National Disability Employment Awareness month. Because AAPD understands the importance of mentoring, the organization built a mentoring component into their Paul Hearne awards. (For additional details, see the Resource section.)

“Investing in new leadership is particularly important for the disability movement because we do not always have the natural intergenerational opportunities for passing

the mantle of leadership that exist in other communities,” according to Andrew J. Imparato, AAPD president and chief executive officer. He goes on to say, *“For many, having a disability can be an isolating experience and it can take years to learn about and connect with the community of disability advocates.”*

Effective leadership is an essential ingredient of positive social change. *“Who will lead us?”* asks William C. Richardson, Ph.D. from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. *“The answer, of course, is that we will be led by those we have taught, and they will lead us as we have shown them they should.”* The Kellogg Foundation lists personal qualities essential to effective leadership: self-understanding, listening skills (which can often be the most challenging to master), empathy, honesty, integrity, and the ability to work collaboratively.

Leadership denotes commitment, empathy (the understanding of others), and competence which denotes skills-building, rather than knowledge alone. The Kellogg foundation views self-knowledge as enhancing authenticity since it is hard to be honest with others if you do not understand your own beliefs and values.¹

To be an effective leader, an individual must have self-esteem and confidence which leads to competence and commitment. These concepts clearly articulate leading by example. Commitment represents a willingness to keep on task even in the face of controversy and conflict. It also mandates that leaders be genuine with each other. Some may want to become a leader overnight but as stated previously, it is a process. Developing the expertise to become an effective leader may take years.

¹ Kellogg Foundation, Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change, 1999.

Learning About Leadership

There are many ways to learn about leadership, from formal to informal activities. Many formal trainings, seminars and workshops are listed in the Resource section of this handbook. Informal activities are critical however, since much of the leadership literature changes frequently. Self-learning also increases one's critical thinking skills.

Leadership Development Planning written by Carter McNamara in 1999, contains a table with numerous ideas about leadership activities for learning. These include:

- _ Seeking a mentor
- _ Hiring a coach
- _ Reading about core competencies to lead others
- _ Learning to be a mentor yourself
- _ Practicing skills in listening
- _ Facilitating a meeting
- _ Regularly soliciting feedback from others about your leadership skills
- _ Identifying traits of your favorite leader
- _ Joining a board of directors
- _ Conducting a self-assessment.

New Emerging Leaders

The feeling of empowerment that comes from skill enhancement and accompanying leadership can lead to small changes. Over time, this evolutionary process naturally leads to new and emerging leaders who are recognized and supported by others.

A new, two day workshop designed for individuals with developmental disabilities is now being used. It uses *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey. Suggestions for getting the most from this workshop which can be applied to any and all leadership development programs are: Learn it, study, think and ask questions.

Live it, challenge and apply yourself and make a commitment. Some of the Seven Habits are: Be proactive (responsible), begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win-win, seek first to understand then to be understood.²

NCD conducted fourteen regional briefings across the nation during the summer of 2000.

The focus of discussion was on *Closing the Gap: A Ten-Point Strategy for the Next Decade of Disability Civil Rights Enforcement*. Action Step 2: Know What to Do and How to Do It: Knowledge is Power underscored the need for educational outreach.

Specifically, feedback from community members suggested that training for grassroots groups, including youth and young adults in high school and college, include civil rights and how to participate in local, state, and federal policy making. The last action Step 10 is: Engage New Leaders with Disabilities. Most public comments on this action step included encouraging young people to join with older leaders in becoming effective self-advocates (leaders). In a concept paper on enforcement of disability rights laws, NCD recommended that federal agencies support leadership training of persons from traditionally underserved groups.

Practicing leadership is essential. Leaders need to get involved and practice their skills by:

- _ Getting involved in local community activities
- _ Volunteering
- _ Attending community hearings and speaking out
- _ Joining local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce or Kiwanis Club
- _ Attending and participating in legislative sessions
- _ Lobbying local, state and national governmental bodies
- _ Joining local disability and human rights groups
- _ Voting

² Steven R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 1990.

- _ Seeking elective offices and/or appointments
- _ Writing letters, making phone calls, sending email to newspapers and television stations.

Moving leadership forward in the 21st century is imperative. Many people who study leadership development have cited a lack of evaluations or concrete outcomes that demonstrate lasting change from current leadership development programs. There is a legitimate need for long-term evaluations and effective models so we can duplicate them in our own communities. Generally, leadership programs from the past focus on short term, top down principles. Simultaneously, we are moving into group and team efforts in our workplace so leadership development programs must embrace those efforts.

Grassroots Leaders

New leadership springs from a long tradition of citizen involvement and action, with innovative solutions creating the sharing of power. Grassroots leadership can be different from many mainstream leadership programs. It demonstrates the power of focusing on the person and the community. The curriculum must be adapted to the cultural needs of local communities.³

Characteristics of grassroots leadership:

- _ Draws on personalities and people who do not fit into traditional leader molds
- _ Employs unconventional techniques sometimes perceived as threatening
- _ Motivated more by passion than money
- _ Seeks to achieve shared leadership
- _ Roots are in relationship with community
- _ A first step in a personal growth process

³ Kellogg Foundation, Grassroots Leaders: Growing Healthy and Sustainable Communities, April 1999.

_ Typically involves people who see themselves as outsiders vs. mainstream.⁴

One very successful grassroots effort is ADAPT, (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today). ADAPT is advocating so people with disabilities can live in the community with supports instead of being locked in nursing homes and institutions. ADAPT, since 1983, has used civil disobedience and similar non-violent action tactics to achieve its goals. In the struggle for disability rights, ADAPT has introduced legislation, provided trainings, information, and articles on local and national events. Claude Holcomb, an ADAPT activist sums up their efforts, "*I was in a nursing home for 13 years. I had to fight to get out. It was the beginning of my life at 22.*"

For sustained success, grassroots leaders move from a single issue or isolated problem which usually motivates and starts an effort, to the understanding of the connection and interrelationship of broader issues and strategies. The bigger picture becomes the focus. This leads to a community-wide systems approach that requires commitment and systemic visioning. Since social change occurs at the individual, community, state and national levels, major barriers are:

- _ The ability of individuals and communities to deal with differences
- _ Capacity and time to focus on the big picture
- _ Lack of planning
- _ Too much emphasis on isolated issues with a lack of attention to the linkages
- _ Insufficient time and resources

⁴ Ibid.

– Grassroots leaders who do not perceive themselves as leaders.⁵

“Unless we can develop pragmatic strategies for building a shared consciousness, the danger is all too real that awareness of the need for common agendas will not translate into action,” from NCD’s, *New Paradigm for a New Century: Rethinking Civil Rights Enforcement* concept paper, June 2000.

How do we best reach grassroots leaders? By offering information in short pieces which have practical application, with a wide variety of dissemination venues such as documents, brochures, videos, and the Internet. Guidance from leaders of diverse cultures should assist in the development and/or adaptation of materials to reach a broad audience and ensure that they are written with sensitivity to specific languages, cultures and accessible formats.

Leadership Reconsidered asks a crucial question. What are we trying to change and why? The answer leads us to the values underlying the process of collaboration. Rather than thinking in old terms of leader-follower, collaboration empowers each individual and capitalizes on the diversity and strengths of each of the members. Together, we represent greater strength than separately.

Collaboration becomes a natural outcome in any leadership process rather than a model based on power and authority. The former model reinforced one particular leader’s position rather than the empowerment of all. The essence of this shift therefore, becomes community. It moves from individual-centered to group-centered actions and outcomes. The collective vision exceeds the individual vision. The purpose of all leadership development now becomes facilitating coalitions or community development. This expands one’s own ability to effect change plus the values of the group supersede those of one leader. This new model requires detachment from the need to hold power and control.

⁵ Kellogg Foundation, *Grassroots Leaders: Growing Healthy and Sustainable Communities*, April 1999.

Now, the emphasis is on having an open mind and discovering common ground amidst diversity.

S. R. Arnstein from *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* (1969) speaks about citizen participation and citizen power. Today we have coined the word “empowerment.” Arnstein emphasizes the importance of redistributing power so that everyone has real power to influence outcomes. Arnstein gives eight levels of participation:

- _ Manipulation
- _ Therapy
- _ Informing people of their rights and options (this usually involves one-way communication only)
- _ Consultation: involves citizens’ opinions through surveys, etc. Power holders claim they have “involved” the people.
- _ Placation: the have-nots are allowed to advise but the Power holders still have the decision-making power.
- _ Partnership: power is redistributed through negotiation
- _ Delegated power: negotiations occur between citizens and public officials giving citizens decision making power and control
- _ Citizen control: participants control a program and govern policy.

According to Arnstein, the first two levels are nonparticipatory, the next three are tokenism, with the last ones describing true citizen power.

The leaders of tomorrow will not fit the old version of hero but rather fulfill the role of teachers, guides and stewards. Effective leaders become facilitators of coalitions and together they constantly learn, share, and encourage. This learning focused environment builds capacity and naturally becomes action focused transferring the leadership learning into real life practical application. It is a group of, for, and by the participants.

Leadership development is removed from a pre-packaged curriculum to a progressive set of ideas, a philosophy, and a way of thinking.

BUILDING EFFECTIVE COALITIONS

“Understand the differences; act on the commonalities.”

Andrew Masondo, African National Congress

Webster defines a coalition as a temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action. Since no one can be as effective on their own as with others, coalitions offer strength in numbers, added credibility, networking and partnerships, media attention and increased access to policy makers. Public opinion is what drives government and therefore broad support through a coalition is one avenue that can effect change.

A natural outcome of effective leadership development is coalition building to move systemic changes forward. Often this movement or group that comes together begins with passion and energy but just as often it comes from anger and frustration. Whatever the reason, the coalition must be organized with foresight and planning instead of multiple forces addressing various issues in an unorganized manner. Fragmented efforts only frustrate coalition members and policy makers while the opponents are then allowed to say, *“See, I told you it wouldn’t work.”*

Most importantly, policy makers expect organized coalitions because it represents the power of numbers. The synergy that Stephen Covey describes in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* is relevant here. Synergy, as he writes, represents the strength of combined forces when separate leaders and/or organizations join together. More power comes from including groups and/or individuals with diverse needs as well as those that do not traditionally join coalitions.

Robert Silverstein with the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy provides characteristics of effective coalitions:

- _ Structure
- _ Leadership
- _ Understanding each organization's constraints
- _ Effective communication
- _ Delegation of tasks
- _ Decision making
- _ Keeping everyone informed.⁶

Members come to a coalition for different reasons and with unique experiences.

Therefore, formalizing rules and setting principles to guide decisions for the coalition are important beginnings that can often be overlooked. However, a coalition's structure is far less important than how the coalition ensures key roles.

What are some important steps for coalition building?

To begin, goals and determining the problem to be addressed must be discussed and agreed upon. Articulating the issue leads to analyzing it. Critical questions like: Who is an ally? Who is the enemy? What do you want to change? When? How? The goals of the coalition will be reinforced if observable changes are noted and evaluated. How effective were the efforts? Is what we are doing, working? These are important questions because each small victory must be recognized and celebrated. This provides momentum and helps eliminate burnout. For some members, if success doesn't appear right away, they will lose interest and drop out. For others, each success helps build other successes and encourages a person to continue.

⁶ The Emerging Disability Policy Framework: A Guide for Developing Public Policy for Persons with Disabilities, Robert Silverstein, October 2000.

Success also depends on the availability and commitment of key stakeholders over a sustained length of time. Because mobilizing others while trying to keep up your own momentum is time and labor intensive, patience, persistency, and endurance are necessary.

Leadership determination. Leaders within the coalition must possess the ability to speak for others, must have credibility, intuition, the ability to read windows of opportunity and understand timing. *Rules for Radicals* by Saul Alinsky describes organizers as being curious, imaginative, irreverent and humorous. Alinsky did not believe that people are motivated by altruism and so he appealed to their self-interests. He asked, *“What really motivates people?”* His answer was their own self interest and money so that was his focus. He also acknowledged the failure of efforts by ineffective communication methods such as not honoring or giving full respect to other’s values. Alinsky stated, *“As an organizer I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be...it is necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it should be. That means working in the system.”* He also felt humor was essential for social and political justice.

Unified message delivery. Communication within and from the coalition to outsiders demands that members not work at cross purposes. Breakdowns can result in loss of members. Differences or conflicts can occur and the key is to resolve them behind closed doors and not in public. If opponents view open disagreements, they could use them against the coalition’s credibility.

One effective model of coalition building was the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), when an unprecedented number of groups from across the disability community came together with the support of thousands of others. ADA would never have been passed without the full cooperation of traditional civil rights groups, other non-disability related coalitions and several key business sectors. They all came

together, presented a unified message, and were successful. *“The ADA is first and foremost the outcome of the extraordinary efforts of the disability community. This is your bill, and you earned it,”* stated Senator Tom Harkin when ADA was signed.

Part of the coalition's setting of rules involves how decisions will be made. All members must have a stake in the strategy and buy-in for the way the process unfolds. This again goes back to the importance of effective communication with a uniform message that is clear and simple. For additional details on implementing a policy coalition, see Robert Silverstein's framework on developing a political strategy.⁷

Member role clarification. Successful coalitions are diverse and allow each person to work at what they do best, utilizing their talents and skills. Chai Feldblum from Georgetown University Law Center, outlines five separate roles in her article, “Five Circles of an Effective Coalition.” They are strategist, lobbyist, legislative lawyer, grassroots person and media person. The strategist thinks of the big picture and guides strategic decision-making. The lobbyist is responsible for talking to legislative staff, speaking and writing clearly, and persistence.

The legislative lawyer advises the coalition on a range of issues including law and policy. The grassroots person must have an understanding of community organizing, be detail oriented and able to collect local data and develop materials for grassroots purposes. Last, the media person develops a message, talking points, and advises others regarding media issues. Everyone representing the coalition delivers a consistent, unified message.

Barriers

“If the tide is left unchecked, if those who would strive for equality and justice cannot unite in the recognition of shared goals and common perils, then no group will escape in

⁷ Ibid.

the end. None will be able to gather up enough crumbs to make any sort of a meal," states NCD in its *New Paradigms for a New Century: Rethinking Civil Rights Enforcement*.

Other barriers include:

- _ Conflict, although it is inevitable
- _ The amount of time it takes to build consensus
- _ The requirement to make fast decisions
- _ The difficulty in measuring outcomes
- _ Scarce resources
- _ Limiting the number of issues to be addressed
- _ Competition among the members
- _ Impatience and a desire among members for instant change
- _ Loss of control for certain members or organizations
- _ Loss of flexibility due to working within a larger group
- _ Loss of the ability to take credit for coalition efforts on an individual basis
- _ Costs of travel time, meetings, and phone calls.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a natural process of effective leadership efforts because it empowers leaders, builds trust and uses the strengths of each member. Sharing skills and talents with a unifying purpose can be a challenge but it also divides the work and if done well, creates a learning environment. Like-minded people coming together with a shared purpose reinforce each other's commitment and therefore encourage individual competency and competency for the group as a whole.

When disagreements do occur, if a safe, respectful environment has been built, it may lead to creative solutions. Conflict should not be avoided but understood as a natural part of group formation. When arguments develop and are encouraged in a collaborative

approach rather than in competition or from a hierarchical viewpoint, listening and empathy skills are expanded. Most often, the group will move through conflicts and gain even more insight and enhanced problem solving skills. The group's whole then becomes more than the sum of its individual parts.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

*"There is nowhere you can go and only be with people who are like you.
Give it up." Bernice Johnson Reagon*

Community mobilization models demonstrate that a wider participation of stakeholders is essential. This includes not only allies, but local government entities, community based organizations, grassroots groups, local residents, parents and family members, people with disabilities, individuals from diverse cultures, and youth.

The integration of local, state and national advocacy efforts must involve a wide range of individuals from different communities representing diversity regarding gender, disability, age, and cultural perspectives. All become important in identifying the problem from their perspective and organizing to plan strategy to address the problem, change it, and sustain those changes. Community mobilization denotes raising people's consciousness and awareness, addressing long term interests, and getting participants to commit and act on those commitments. It almost never occurs spontaneously. It is a process aimed at developing community and agency capacities using a variety of activities. As with coalitions, leadership roles complement one another. Success depends on cooperation and managing conflict.

Mobilizing resources within and across grassroots, interagency and government levels creates an even stronger community collaboration. Greater study or assessment of the problem, if conducted, provides clarity and agreement among key stakeholders. It also allows for greater understanding of the breadth of the problem and possible actions to address them. Good data can provide factual information and help build a framework for a plan.

A community effort is a natural environment for leaders to use their skills. Beginning to share power, control and credit with others provides for an active rather than passive experience. It also allows the community to become mobilized. Recognizing common issues and strengthening relationships continue.

Unlike small coalitions addressing a specific issue, community mobilization actively involves people who are closest to the problem on a daily basis. The participants will be able to clarify issues, define common language, and validate the recommendations. The community mobilization process can move ahead when committed leaders are present and active, when close relationships develop, and when relevant goals and action plans are agreed upon. A key for success is when political and economic forces in the community have bought in to the process. Special attention must be given to include the disenfranchised members of the community such as people within the cultural subgroups who have been traditionally lumped into a single category.

Since each community is unique, each approach should be flexible and structured to the needs of a particular area be it a town, jurisdiction or county. P. L. Benson writes about important cultural changes that are required of communities coming together around a shared vision. The changes involve moving from:

- _ Deficit language to asset language
- _ Some youth to all youth
- _ Age segregation to intergenerational community

- _ Self-interest to shared responsibility
- _ Program focus to relational focus
- _ Fragmented agenda to unifying vision
- _ Conflicting signals to consistent messages
- _ Youth as objects to youth as assets
- _ Shifting priorities to long-term commitment
- _ Civic disengagement to engagement.⁸

Process factors or the “how to” elements described by Bergstrom, Clark, Hogue, Perkins, and Slinski address capacity building. These factors are: grounding or a shared desire to collaborate through valuing diversity of individuals, ideas, and vision gained through understanding values, cultures and habits of the community members. Community mobilization is driven by diverse members who can bring about change.⁹ This increases pressure on politicians and other community leaders, which adds incentives and validates the mobilization efforts.

Community Development in America, (1980) defines the concept of community as involving people, a territory or area, social interaction, or common psychological ties. The book also describes community capacity building. Very simply, the key to community development or mobilization is the process itself that helps people accomplish community improvement through their own efforts.

Focus must be on the redistribution of power. Community mobilization efforts must involve individuals who do not often get involved and those “hard to reach” individuals. It must be a conscious effort. Simply asking for people’s opinions may not reach those individuals most needed in community involvement. It also requires some soul searching for those who are already in leadership positions. How do we get our egos out of the way

⁸ Benson, P.L. *All Kids are our Kids*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass Publishers. (1997).

⁹ Bergstrom, A., Clark, R., Hogue, T., Perkins, D., & Slinski, M. *Collaboration Framework: Addressing Community Capacity*. University of New Mexico: the National Network for Collaboration. (1995).

and not merely allow others to lead and control the power, but actually encourage leadership in others we may not fully endorse and agree with? Can we let someone else get all the glory and praise? What if the leaders disagree? Can we be a leader by being silent and not let our opinions be communicated and known?

One problem for people with disabilities from diverse cultures is to not be invited to the table. It is quite another to be at the table and not be acknowledged. Often there is a silent unspoken code of conduct within coalitions. We have only one leader and if disagreements arise, although we say we share the power, our actions dictate unilateral control. Do we truly know how to share the power? Or do we say those words until we get to be the one in power, when suddenly it is not so easy.

The essential question we all have to ask ourselves and be willing to answer honestly is, *“What am I willing to learn, give up, promote and actually do to empower others?”*

As we continue to learn, we must then take the important steps to challenge ourselves and others, be open to feedback and actually change. We must give up any personal concerns of not being liked by others and get comfortable with not being in control. We must put the responsibility squarely back on ourselves, to act unselfishly and without malice. We have to be able to ask, why is it we don't have more leaders?

Barriers

Turf areas and competition along with past history are the primary barriers to community mobilization. A failure to act is often due to a dominance by professionals, although poor links to the community and/or not having a diverse group of stakeholders can also frustrate efforts. Failure to provide or create leadership is a barrier and can be eliminated if strong leadership development efforts are instituted first and then coalitions and community mobilization efforts follow from that. Leadership development continues to be the most important component that frequently can be overlooked. Costs and funding problems are also barriers. Often, communities receive too little funding to carry out

their initiatives, but even too much funding may be problematic since then a perception of the costs outweighing the benefits is presented and that becomes the barrier.¹⁰ Barriers to effective coalitions may be that individuals still continue to develop solutions in their own terms, no real interagency cooperation develops, leadership is not available from certain key stakeholder groups, and lack of resources slows the mobilization process down.

Successes

A critical component for success is to begin working from strengths rather than deficits. Beginning with some positives and things that work as opposed to merely gaps and deficiencies in the community creates an immediate starting point of commonalities. This becomes a building block for enhancing community efforts rather than issues that can divide and then lead to destructive rather than constructive guidelines.

William Lofquist in *Discovering the Meaning of Prevention* (1982) acknowledges an important distinction between reacting and activating. He describes being proactive as taking assertive action and using quality leadership skills in a community. He illustrates how a community development approach can make people take action through empowerment that mobilizes them to take shared responsibility for improvements. Lofquist believes that people are their own best resource for bringing about change and that their participation promotes ownership and vested interest in those changes.

Lofquist suggests three easy questions for coalition formation:

- _ Where are you now?
- _ Where do you want to be?
- _ How will you get there?

¹⁰ Kaye, G., & Wolff, T., (eds.) *From the Ground Up: A Workbook on Coalition Building and Community*

Empowerment

Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) define empowerment as “*the connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain.*” Empowerment indeed predicts participation. Empowered leaders are self-confident and therefore more likely to engage in community efforts. Community empowerment implies power sharing by all organizations and individuals.

The Cornell Empowerment Group defines community empowerment as “*an intentional caring, and group participation on-going process centered in the local community, with mutual respect, critical reflection, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain great access to and control over those resources.*” (Wolff and Foster, 1992)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

“Trust is a risk game. The leader must ante up first.”

Irwin Federman, CEO Monolithic Memories

Leadership development programs must be expanded and enhanced particularly to include people with disabilities from diverse cultures. Successful programs need to be evaluated, documented, and replicated whenever possible. Private and public entities must fund and support leadership development as well as follow-up placements such as internships, fellowships, volunteer opportunities, shadowing experiences and ongoing workshops.

Development (2nd Ed.) Massachusetts: AHEC/Community Partners (1997).

After leaders have emerged, private and public organizations must once again fund training and mentoring efforts to place people with disabilities from diverse cultures in leadership positions. The skills and knowledge learned must be put into practice recognizing that often the experienced, established leaders of the past must move on to make a place for others. Mentoring becomes an essential component for advancement so that every leader mentors someone and is simultaneously being mentored by another with different and/or broader experiences.

To change public policy at the local, state and national levels, multiple coalitions must form and work together collaboratively to produce systemic changes. Individual leaders comprise the coalition membership. Leaders (members) must adopt an attitude of understanding and respect for one another.

"It is time now to don a larger mantle, the broader identity of those who seek and lead a meaningful new vision for America at the dawn of a new millennium. Nothing less will inspire enough people to do enough hard work; nothing less will carry us through to success," writes NCD in *New Paradigms for a New Century*, June 2000. In the future, leaders who participate in forming coalitions must realize that the benefits of collaboration far outweigh any loss of autonomy or loss of control (the old paradigm of leader). Coalition members share a sense of ownership regarding the process and its outcomes. The coalition is, as are all of the leaders, flexible about the organizational structure but realize that all roles and responsibilities are clear. Coalitions must be adaptable to change. Partners in the 21st century must share the same vision and agree on the coalition's goals and strategy to be able to move public policy forward. Partners must recognize and honor unique needs and differences within cultural groups and subgroups to avoid in-fighting which leads to division and factions. We, as leaders, must realize that together we are greater than we are individually.

Future leadership models recognize that our strengths lie in our diversity and that cultural differences must not only be understood but embraced. Including the interests of all community leaders and stakeholders from the beginning minimizes conflict and enhances access to culturally sensitive information and the coalition's expertise. The sharing of power is vital. Trust, power-sharing, and compromise are all essential to effective collaboration. Again, this moves us from the old top-down model of leadership to servant leadership or stewardship.

Empowering ourselves and each other to solve problems regardless of history and experiences, allows coalitions to endure and most importantly, to effect sustained change. When we begin to see real change, through outcomes and process measures, the celebration of success will occur. This, in turn, will renew our energies and help us all sustain our on-going efforts.

In closing, *Lessons from the Geese* (author unknown) summarizes our interdependence:

- _ As the birds flap their wings, a 71 percent uplift is created for the other geese.

Lesson: People who share a common direction can go farther with less effort because they are traveling on the energy and momentum of each other.

- _ When a goose flies out of formation, it hits the drag and resistance trying to do it alone.

Lesson: It is harder to do something alone. By going together, we can receive and give help to each other.

- _ When the lead goose tires, it rotates to the rear.

Lesson: Sharing leadership allows us to take turns doing the hard work and provides opportunities to use each other's skills, capabilities, and resources.

- _ When flying in formation, geese honk from behind to spur each other on and keep the group going.

Lesson: It is important to encourage each other and to cheer each other on. Keep the honking positive.

- _ When a goose gets sick or wounded and flies out of formation, two other geese will follow it down until it dies or wait while it rests and gets better so they can rejoin other geese as they fly by.

Lesson: We need to stand by each other during the good times as well as the difficult times.

RESOURCES

Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and William Ury. (1981). Penguin Books. A book on negotiation.

A Guide to Community-based, Collaborative Strategic Planning. (1994). J. K. Chynoweth, Washington, DC Council of Governors' Policy advisors A practical guide that provides tips and indicators for assessing community system change.

Collaboration Framework: Addressing Community Capacity. T. Hogue, D. Perkins, R. Clark, A. Bergstrom, M. Slinski & Associates. (1995) Columbus, OH: National Network for Collaboration. Identifies five common elements of a collaboration framework and factors of each.

Collaboration: What Makes it Work. P. N. Mattessich & B. R. Mansey. (1992). Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. A review of research literature on factors influencing successful collaboration

Working Toward Community Goals: Helping Communities Succeed. (1997). North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Ames, IA: Iowa State University. Helps communities measure effects of rural community development efforts.

The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. Peter Senge. (1990). New York: Currency Doubleday. Applicable to any group working toward a common goal of collaboration.

Developmental Disabilities Leadership Forum: Leadership Perspectives in Developmental Disability. An on-line journal for consumers, professionals, family and friends (www.ddleadership.org/journal).

Monmouth University's Integrated Leadership and Social Responsibility program/curriculum, 400 Cedar Avenue, West Long Beach, NJ 07764; 732-571-4474.

Leadership Development Institute at the University of Detroit Mercy, 4001 West McNichols Road., Detroit, MI 48219; 313-993-1776. Brings together students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to partner with diverse community leaders.

Tennessee State University's Project Bridge. Primary goal is to increase the number of ethnically diverse students entering graduate studies and later, public service careers. Mentoring and internships are components as well as workshops and counseling.

Black Student Leadership Network. Created by the Children's Defense Fund. Incorporates servant leadership principles and a summer internship.

Leadership from a Multicultural Perspective at the State University of New York-Buffalo. Offers a shadowing component including diversity and conflict resolution.

Youth Link Public Policy and Leadership Project. Created by the Coalition for Children in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Involves four phases over three years on collective policy and decision making.

Patricia Roberts Harris Public Affairs Program at Howard University. Develops new leaders with a commitment to ethical public service.

The Center for Visionary Leadership's Best Practices Project. Their book is entitled *Celebrate the Spirit of Success: A Guidebook to Best Practices*. Free copies are available by calling the Resource Center 1-800-955-2232 (www.visionarylead.org).

The Community Leadership Association, 200 S. Meridian Street, Suite 250, Indianapolis, IN 46225; 317-637-7408 or Fax: 317-637-7413.

The Boggs Center (www.boggscenter.org). Helps grassroots activists develop themselves into visionary leaders and critical thinkers who can devise pro-active strategies for rebuilding our communities from the ground up, demonstrate the power of ideas and demystify leadership.

The Advocacy Institute's Leadership Fellows Program, 1629 K Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20006-1629; 202-777-7575 or Fax: 202-777-7577 (info@advocacy.org).

A Practical Guide to Leadership Development. Roger Sublett, Delores Grubb, Maureen Myers, and Jill Grant. A Kellogg Foundation Publication. The Kellogg National Leadership Program focuses on assisting emerging leaders in the development of skills, knowledge and competencies addressing community issues.

Grassroots Leaders: Growing Healthy and Sustainable Communities. (April 1999).
The Kellogg Foundation (www.wkkf.org).

Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change. W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin
A Framework for 21st Century Leadership. Lorilee Sandmann, Lela Vandenberg.
Michigan State University. Published by Extension Journal, (joe-ed@joe.org).
December 1995, Volume 33 Number 6.

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, 921 East 86th Street, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46240; 317-259-1241, 317-259-0560 (fax); (<http://greenleaf.org>).

National Community Building Network, 101 Broadway, 2nd floor, Oakland, CA 94607; 510-663-6226, 510-663-6222 (fax) (www.ncbn.org).

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Dr. Stephen R. Covey. Call 1-800-272-6839 for a workshop. Specifically designed workshops available for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Rules for Radicals. Saul Alinsky. (1971) .

National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs. (www.inform.umd.edu). Provides a clearinghouse of leadership materials, resources, and assistance to leadership educators.

Ball State University—Excellence in Leadership Program. Developed a direct link between leadership in curriculum and out-of-class experiences.

Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement—Oregon Leadership Institute. Improve the personal and public policy skills of Hispanic youth leaders through a statewide leadership institute.

Rural Communities: Legacy and Change. Describes rural communities, change and the provision of services.

The LEAP Community Development Institute, (www.leap.org), 327 East 2nd Street, Suite 226, Los Angeles, CA 90012; 213-485-1422 or 213-485-0050 (fax).

Develops Asian-Pacific American Leadership in the private, public, and community sectors in order to achieve full participation and equality for Asian-Pacific Americans through leadership, empowerment and policy.

Community Minority Cultural Center, 298 Union Street., 2nd floor, Lynn, Massachusetts 01901; (www.cmcclynn.org). Promotes multiculturalism, provides cultural enrichment programs for all youths and adults so they may take pride in the achievements of all ethnic groups and races.

Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc, 6319 Constitution Drive., Fort Wayne, IN 46804; 219-436-4402, 219-436-5354 (fax) (cpyinc@aol.com). Non-profit national training and resource development organization promoting increased youth voice in organizations and communities.

Youth On Board, 58 Day Street., 3rd floor, PO Box 440322, Somerville, MA 02144; 617-623-9900, Ext. 1242; (www.youthonboard.org). Preparing youth to be leaders and decision makers in all aspects of their lives by building skills and their capacity to help improve communities.

ASPIRA Association, 1444 Eye Street., NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005; 202-835-3600, 202-835-3613 (fax) (info@aspira.org). National non-profit organization devoted to the education and leadership development of Puerto Rican and other Latino youth.

Foundation for Individual Responsibility and Social Trust (FIRST),

(www.libertynet.org/~first), 2500 One Liberty Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103; 215-204-3871, 215-204-3770 (fax). Non-profit dedicated to inspiring young adults to address the major political, economic, and social issues while taking a leadership role in finding creative outcomes.

Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 941 'O' Street, Suite 920, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508; 1-800-927-1115 (www.4w.com/heartland/info.html). Non-profit organization developing local leadership responding to challenges of the future. Focus is on practical resources and public policies for rural community survival.

Advocacy II: Unite in Power: Building Coalitions and Developing Strategies to Influence Change. A manual from a conference sponsored by ILRU/NCIL National Training and Technical Assistance Program, Houston, TX (1999); 1-800-223-5219.

Youth Leadership Forum, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, 202 N. 9th Street. 9th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219; 800-846-4464 (voice/TTY). Statewide leadership forum designed to help teens with disabilities become self-reliant, achieve their personal and professional goals, and become active in their communities.

AWID, 666 11th Street, NW, Suite 450, Washington, DC 20001. Promoting feminist leadership working to eradicate inequalities, placing an analysis of gender relations at the heart of the actions, to build the number of and the quality of leaders.

Mobility International USA, PO Box 10767, Eugene, Oregon 97440; 541-343-1284, 541-343-6812 (fax); (info@miusa.org). A practical resource entitled *Loud, Proud, and Passionate: Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Programs* includes strategies for development organizations and women with disabilities to partner in development programs.

Leadership Development Strategies for Women with Disabilities: A Cross-Cultural Survey. Laura Hershey and Robin Stephens (1995). MIUSA.

Institute for Disability Studies, University of Southern Mississippi

(www.dept.usm.edu/~ids). Leadership development for access to health and disability related services. Prepares coalitions of consumers, their families, and health, human, and education service providers to become effective change agents in policy making.

Paul G. Hearne/AAPD Leadership Awards. American Association of People with Disabilities, 1819 H Street. NW, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20006; 1-888-712-4672 (www.aapd-dc.org). Annually, up to 12 people with disabilities who are emerging leaders in their own fields will each receive \$10,000 to help them continue their progress as leaders.

Outreach and Advocacy for Black and Hispanic People with Mental Disabilities.

(1990). National Health Law Program. It includes information that is designed to assist staff, advisors and members of protection and advocacy governing boards become aware of barriers to services, disability, human, and civil rights violations faced by people from diverse cultures who have mental health disabilities. Guidelines for reaching out to diverse consumers and for identifying consumer advocacy needs, and developing strategies to protect rights are also included.

Outreach to Native Americans: American Indian Developmental Disabilities

Research Project. (1993). Three Feathers Associates. This is an executive summary of

findings by a Native American organization. The document includes the findings from interviews with key federal officials and a national survey of professionals who provide services to Native American populations. It also includes recommendations for policy makers and service providers at the state, national and tribal levels regarding the effective service delivery to Native American populations.

Hispanics in The United States: An Insight into Group Characteristics. Santiago Rodriquez. (July 1995). Department of Health and Human Services. This article provides information and statistics about Hispanic Americans in the United States. Issues discussed include nomenclature, group stereotypes and the origins of major subgroups.

American Indian Rehabilitation Programs: Unmet Needs, Twenty-First Institute on Rehabilitation Issues. (October 1995). Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation, Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. The provision of cross-cultural services is a major feature of this document. It summarizes the findings from a discussion group that included 11 professionals in the field of Native American rehabilitation. The material examines a number of rehabilitation models used to serve Native Americans and Native Alaskans with disabilities and recommends several alternative rehabilitation models that are believed to be more effective for providing cross-cultural rehabilitation services in tribal communities.

Outreach to Latino and Hispanic Americans: Cultural Competence Guidelines in Managed Care: Mental Health Services for Latino Populations. (December 1996). National Latino Behavioral Health Workgroup. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. This report examines how the transition into managed care creates unique concerns for the Latino populations in the United States. The report sets forth a set of guiding principles and guidelines concerning cultural competency including

planning, governance, design, monitoring, staff training, assessment, and case management.

Outreach Services For American Indians, Priscilla R. Sanderson, American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Northern Arizona University. This paper rejects the "myth" that Native Americans/American Indians and Alaska Natives constitute a homogeneous class, i.e. one showing no internal cultural diversity. The author discusses the involvement of tribal members in the "designing" of services (ensuring that they have a leadership role in the formulation of services to be offered) and understanding the cultural practices of a given tribal community.

Building Networks in the Latino Community: A Mechanism For Empowerment.

Lucy Wong-Hernandez. San Jose State University Foundation. The document describes omission of Hispanic/Latino people from traditional study, research, and literature particularly on disability. The author also highlights the importance of determining and carrying out effective strategies for networking, collaboration, and communication and makes recommendations on how to improve the situation through empowerment.

Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility. It is run for and by people with developmental and other disabilities at the Center for Development and Learning at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, CB #7255, Chapel Hill, NC 27599; 919-966-5171. Its workshops build knowledge and help create leadership options for people with disabilities through hands-on activities, discussion and video. Also see Shifting the Power training project on self-advocacy and leadership.

The National Center for Self-Determination and 21st Century Leadership. It supports leadership among people with developmental disabilities to promote self-determination throughout the United States. Oklahoma People First, 16 East 16th Street, Suite 405, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-4447; 918-582-8272, 918-582-3628 (fax). (nward@ddadvocacy.com).