

Activity 1.19 Are leaders born or bred?

Module: 1. Identity and Culture

Duration: 60 Minutes

Social Development Themes: Social Enterprise

Summary

Leaders are made, not born and how they develop is critical to organisational success. We all have the potential to lead, at whatever level and responsibility is appropriate. Recognising this and developing others within the organisation with a range of skills and attributes is a key quality of a good leader.

A good leader develops leaders, not followers. To be a good leader first you have to practice self-leadership, develop yourself by recognising your strengths and developing weaker areas. Taking part in this programme is an example of self-leadership.

Learning Outcomes:

Social Enterprise Leadership and Values

Approach:

In pairs ask participants to share examples of good leaders. These can be nationally recognised leaders or people who have had a positive impact on their lives e.g. a previous or current employer, a teacher, youth worker, family member. What effect did this person have on you?

In plenary, take turns to share their partners example of good leadership. Note key characteristics on flip chart.

Divide into groups of 4 or 5 and challenge the group to decide on 4 key one word characteristics / traits of a good leader. This may be drawn from the characteristics on the flip chart or characteristics which are not listed. Everyone in the group has to agree. Feedback in plenary and discuss.

Then in the groups of 4 or 5 draw an outline of a person on a flip chart sheet and ask the group to think about what the difference between a great leader and a great SE leader is. Then ask them to write:

- Next to the head: what a good social enterprise leader is thinking about

- Next to the heart: what a good social enterprise leader is feeling

- Next to the hands and feet: what a good social enterprise leader is doing

Groups take turns to present the poster to the whole group.

Some of the characteristics will likely be more Management than Leadership. Take the opportunity to introduce and discuss the difference between Leadership and Management, the difference between working IN the business and working ON the business, the difference between daily operations and future strategy and direction.

Important: Then ask participants to work in pairs again or on their own to have a look at the outputs of what people have presented. Ask them to think about themselves as leaders – where are their strengths? What have they identified in others that they already have in themselves? Ask them to also write down their areas of development – what have they seen or heard about great leaders that they would like to develop in themselves? Take some time to think about how they might do that.

Are Leaders born or bred? Discuss in plenary.

Some points you might want to draw out:

Do their pictures provide a comprehensive list of characteristics and attributes of a leader? Were people able to recognise some within themselves, while others represented areas for development? For example, someone may be a visionary but struggle with communicating.

Debrief:

We all have the potential to lead, in whatever level and responsibility is appropriate. Recognising this and developing others within the organisation with a range of skills and attributes is a key quality of a good leader. A good leader develops leaders, not followers.