Develop and Lead Organisations

Level 4

- Learner Manual –

The development practice project

These learning materials were generated by the Development Practice project, hosted by the Sustainability Institute and in partnership with Community Connections, AIDS Consortium and Keystone. This project generated a set of competence standards with development practitioners in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, between 2005 and 2009. This manual is part of a set of materials consisting of a competence standard, learner's manual, facilitator's guide and an assessment tool. More information on this project is available on the Development Practice website

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CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

Welcome to this manual on **Developing and Leading organisations**.

This learner manual, accompanied by a facilitated programme of activities, should be followed up by practical 'on-the-job' experience and practice (supported by a mentor if possible). Once you have read through this learner manual, done all the exercises, and implemented the learnings in your organisation, you will be ready to have your competence assessed, if you choose.

Below follows the Specific Outcomes and Assessment Criteria that this learner manual is based on. This means that at the end of your learning period, you will be able to practice all the points listed below. During the learning period you will be reminded to keep and file proof of your work. This is called a Portfolio of Evidence. It is a collection of evidence to show what was leant during the course and from past experience, including all other training courses attended. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is when all your learning is taken into account and acknowledged when assessed for a specific standard. Outcomes are the result of your learning. At the end of each section there is a symbol for you to check your understanding.

Please read the competency standard below carefully.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Specific outcomes	Assessment criteria
Competence in this standard means that the learner has clearly shown that s/he is able to...	*Tasks and activities completed by the learner contain the following evidence of competence...*
1. Build healthy teams	With reference to a specific group: *AC1:* Group development is explained *AC2:* Possible group dynamics are identified in a specific context *AC3:* Different interests, perspectives and relationships among group members are analysed *AC4:* Processes to facilitate agreement on group behaviour and conduct are described *AC5:* Different ways to build open and supportive group environments are described
2. Reflect on the role of a leader in an organisation	*AC1:* Various leadership styles and approaches are described and analysed *AC2:* The characteristics of a good leader are explained (with examples in practise provided) *AC3:* Own personal leadership style is identified and its possible strengths and challenges discussed *AC4:* Fears and vulnerabilities in being a leader are discussed *AC5:* A plan for leadership development is evident
3. Select appropriate processes to develop the organisation	*AC1:* Stages of organisational development are explained and the challenges of each identified *AC2:* An organisation is analysed in terms of its current stage of development and group dynamics *AC3:* The needs of different organisations are discussed and interventions suggested *AC4:* Processes to reflect and learn within organisations are described and used

4. Communicate effectively (including giving and receiving feedback)	AC1: The ability to listen attentively and learn from others is demonstrated *AC2:* Cultural sensitivity and confidentiality is displayed in their dealings with others *AC3:* Communication is conducted in an open and transparent way with stakeholders *AC4:* Situations where feedback is needed are identified *AC5:* Ways of giving and receiving feedback are practised both individually and in a group context AC5: Considerations with regards to difficult feedback are explored
5. Manage basic conflict situations	*AC1:* The sources of conflict are identified and discussed *AC2:* Some methods of dealing with conflict are mentioned *AC3:* A tolerant and non-judgemental approach is demonstrated *AC4:* Practical examples of successful conflict resolution are described

Note: Tasks may be presented for an actual or hypothetical organisation but must be learner's original work and not copied from existing documents. Learners should be able to explain and justify their statements.

ACTIVITIES

There are a number of activities in the manual. These activities are an important part of the learning approach and you are encouraged to complete them as part of your learning process. They will become part of your own "toolkit" to help you operate more effectively. Some of these activities can also be used as part of your portfolio of evidence (PoE), which you need to compile if you wish to be assessed for competence in this standard.

Symbols used in this workbook

	Self-test
	This designates a <u>self-test section</u> - this is an opportunity for you to check your understanding and if you are unclear, to discuss with your trainer.

	Case study/Example
	Case studies or examples will tell you about a practical application of something that has been discussed or covered in the course.

	Individual activity
	This sign marks an activity – either during the class or as homework. These activities are important to complete – both for your understanding but also as they can be included as part of your Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) for assessment.

	Group activity
	This sign means that this activity is a group work activity.

INTRODUCTION

Leading organisations is often a challenging and demanding role in a community based organisation. Often Community Based Organisations are informal in structure and were formed spontaneously from a need in a community. Leaders of these organisations, often are inspirational members of the community, but sometimes have very little experience developing and leading an organisation.

In this course we will be exploring the skills and capacities needed to develop and lead a community organisation. We will be looking at how groups develop, what leaders can do to support this, what different kinds of leadership styles can be used and how to handle the different interest groups and group dynamics. This manual will look at how we understand this role of a leader and how we can develop this to support the development of our organisations.

It is therefore quite a reflective programme, in which we will spend time thinking about our own leadership styles and about understanding groups and organisations better. It is not a task list for managing people – this is covered in the competency area of *Motivate and co-ordinate members of an organisation* and in *Plan and Manage distinct community development projects*. A focus on learning together as a group is covered in *Facilitate learning processes within an organisation.*

There is no one right way for leadership – and not only one way to develop groups. Together we will explore some of the different options and learn about different tools so that you can then decide what you think works best for you and your organisation. Each situation is different and might require different approaches, and we will learn together how to decide what is best in different environments.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Leadership in a Community Organisation

We all play leadership roles in different ways in our lives and communities.

Individual activity

Think about where in your life you play the role of leader? What do you think your strengths are as a leader and what are some of your challenges?

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In an organisation, every member needs to offer leadership at different times. However, depending on the structure of your organisation, you will have specific jobs that require a leadership focus. These are often the roles of manager or director, team leader, project manager and the chairperson of the board.

Some organisations have a _hierarchical_ structure (there is one main person in charge, who makes most of the decisions and passes this on to others). This often has limited participation and consultation with staff that are not in official leadership positions. Some organisations have more of a _team based_ structure where decisions are shared and management's role is more about co-ordinating and supporting staff.

Individual activity

What kind of structure does your organisation have? What are the benefits and the challenges of the kind of leadership structure that your organisation has chosen?

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In community based organisations, where often members are volunteers, it is important that your leadership and organisational structure helps people to stay motivated and builds a sense of ownership.

Leadership is about power. Many people have mixed feelings about power because power has often been abused, and at times people abuse their leadership positions. However, the use of power and leadership itself can be very positive and empowering, depending on how it is used.

Leadership styles

There are many different types of leadership styles – all of them can be used positively and negatively.

	Group activity
	Describe some different leadership styles that you have experienced and what you liked and disliked about these:

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These are 3 that we will discuss in this manual:

- Authoritarian Leadership
- Consultative Leadership
- Enabling Leadership

Group activity

In groups, define these 3 different leadership styles and what you understand them to mean:

- Authoritarian Leadership

- Consultative Leadership

- Enabling Leadership

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Some examples of different leadership styles used when making decisions:

Authoritarian Leadership			Consultative Leadership			Enabling Leadership	
Leader makes decisions and announces it	Leader presents decisions but "sells it to members"	Leader presents decisions and invites questions of clarification	Leader presents tentative decision that is subject to change	Leader presents situation and gets input to make decision	Leader calls on members to make decisions but holds final veto	Leader defines limits, then calls on member to make decisions	Leader calls on members to identify limits, explore situation and make decisions

Taken from *Training for Transformation*, Book III, Pg 119

Group activity

In groups, discuss the type of leadership style you would use in the different situations?

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Different situations call for different leadership styles. The authoritarian style is most useful in situations of survival, a consultative approach when security is important and enabling leadership when you want to encourage participation and empowerment.

Community organisations, because of their focus on development, often require a more participative and empowering leadership style. Organisations are often staffed with individuals who are entering this field, in need of development and growth and who require leaders and leaderships styles that will support this.

Individual activity

How would you describe your leadership style?

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Roles of a leader

Group activity

What does a good leader do in a group?

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A good leader will do a number of different things in a group. Below are some:

- **Observe the team** – to notice where the problems are. What are the strengths and weaknesses? What jobs are being done and what still needs to be done?

- **Identify critical issues** – Identify together as a team the things that are important for success

- **Learn ways to solve key problems** – Try to involve people and get them to participate in solving the problems themselves

- **Practice what you preach** – Remember that if you preach about listening well or participation and empowerment, you need to demonstrate this as a leader too. There cannot be different rules for the leader than for those s/he leads as this builds resentment and mistrust.

- **Observe people's feeling**- note how people feel particularly about difficult issues and try and make time to discuss this and resolve this in the group

- **Be aware of the needs of the group** – more on this in the next chapter.

- **Listen** – listen to people and try to be non-judgemental. Do not interrupt people when they are speaking and try not to jump to conclusions about what they are saying but ask good questions to clarify

- **Be flexible** – be prepared to change for the group and to let go of some of your ideas and opinions.

- **Encourage feedback and openness** – try to encourage these practices in your team and take seriously the feedback you receive about your actions. There is more on this later in this manual.

- **Be accountable** – always take responsibility for what you do, right or wrong.

Adapted from *The New Toolkit for CBOs,* Vol 3, pg 6

Self-test

You should be able to:

- Describe various leadership styles and approaches
- Explain the characteristics of a good leader
- Identify your own personal leadership style and its possible strengths and challenges

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM

A group exists when two or more people come together to share a common goal. In organisations we often call this group a team. Some organisations are made up of one team, while others, because of the nature of the projects or tasks, break themselves up into lots of different teams.

Group activity

In pairs, think about the different groups you are involved in (e.g. sports club, church, organisations etc). What works well in these groups and what doesn't?

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It is the leader's responsibility to make sure the needs of the group are met so that the organisation stays healthy and productive. Some groups or teams work well together and are great to be a part of, while other teams leave members feeling dissatisfied, frustrated or isolated.

Groups have both needs and dynamics. All groups have basic needs, while the dynamics of a group change and shift over time and in different situations. One of the roles of a leader is to observe the team or group and to try to understand the

group dynamics and the needs of the group. This will help the leader know how to intervene and how best to enhance the development of the group (and the organisation).

Needs of a group

Group activity

What do you think the needs of a group are?

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It is helpful to think of group needs as being grouped into these 2 areas:

- **The task -** Every group has a job to do – a reason why they exist. It is important to help a group stay focused on their direction so that they do not get frustrated. Focusing on setting goals is a helpful way to do this.

- **The relationships** – To get the task done, the group needs to stay together and work well together. The individual needs of the group should be met and healthy relationships encouraged amongst. It is therefore important to build trust and understanding amongst the group and assist people to deal with conflict constructively when it happens. A sense of belonging to the team/ group is also really important and should be fostered.

Another important area, but harder to define, is the **values** of the group. These are the principles and vision on which the organisation or group is built. This needs to

be nurtured and developed otherwise the group will lose its identity and people will no longer be attached to the core purpose of the group.

It is the leader's responsibility to make sure that these needs are being cared for.

Individual activity

What can a leader do to make sure the task needs and the relationship needs are being met? How can a leader help to make the values explicit and clear?

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Stages of Group development

Along with the basic needs, groups also go through different stages in their development. Just like a person grows from child to adult, so do groups develop and change.

Group activity

Draw a picture of how you think groups develop. (Think back to being part of a new group that eventually worked together for a long time):

Below is one model of four stages of group development (developed by B.W.Tuckman) that most groups go through:

Forming ⇒ Storming ⇒ Norming ⇒ Performing

Group activity

What do you think happens at each stage of group development and what do you think the leader can do at each stage to support development?

FORMING _____

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STORMING _____

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NORMING _____

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PERFOMING_____

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Forming is the stage when the group first comes together. Everybody is very polite. Conflict seldom happens openly. Since the group is new, the individuals are shy about their own opinions and generally reserved. This is particularly so in terms of the more nervous and/or subordinate members

Storming is the next stage. Factions form, personalities clash, no-one gives a single point without first fighting tooth and nail. Most importantly, very little communication occurs since no one is listening and some are still unwilling to talk openly. It is not always this extreme but there is always a testing of the group and its contract.

Then comes **Norming**. At this stage people begin to see the benefits of working together and the fighting subsides. A new spirit of co-operation can emerge and people begin to feel secure in expressing their own view points and these are discussed openly with the whole group. The most significant improvement is that people start to listen to each other. Work methods become established and recognized by the group as a whole.

And finally: **Performing**. This is when the group has settled on a system which allows free and honest exchange of views and a high degree of support by the group for each other and its own decisions.

Here are some questions that leaders can ask themselves at each stage of the group's development:

How can I help the group to build trust?
What will make the group start to communicate honestly?
What guidelines can I set up to assist the group to work well together?

Storming

How can I support those who are being honest about their feelings?
How can I help the conflict be constructive and positive?
How can I prevent the conflict from becoming destructive?
How can I assist the group to control any aggression?

Norming

Is the group starting to develop and work together as a team?
How can I encourage responsibility amongst the team?
What are our unspoken rules?
Does the group have a vision of their values and identity?

Performing

Are the group needs being met?
Is everyone fulfilling their role/ task in the team?
What achievements can we celebrate in the group?

An Overview – the Stages of Group Development

	Group Processes	Possible ways of Assisting Groups through the process
Stage 1: Forming	- Considerable anxiety - Testing relationship - Dependency on the leader - Hesitant participation - Will they let me join?	- Clear introductions "safe" starters - Visibility of the leader - Opportunity for group members to contribute
Stage 2: Storming	- Conflict emerges between sub-groups - Ambivalence towards the leader - Fighting - Defensiveness, competition, jealousy	- Open recognition of conflict/ anger - Opportunity to express ideas which are valued by the leader - Allow members to challenge in a constructive, not a destructive way
Stage 3: Norming	- Group Cohesion develops - Norms emerge - Authority problems resolved - Members identify with the group	- Allow time for members to begin to work, talk - Draw up plans, make preliminary decisions
Stage 4: Performing	- Clear, flexible rules - Pragmatism in support of task - Satisfaction in achievement	Let them do it and join if appropriate

Group Dynamics

Along with the stages of group development, a leader also needs to be aware of various dynamics that can exist in a group. We use the word dynamics to speak about the tension or issues that are going on under the surface of the group's interaction. It can also be used to explain the energy or patterns that any group forms.

	Group activity
	What are group dynamics? What kinds of dynamics have you noticed in the groups and/or organisations you have worked in?

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The dynamics of a group are made up of the various personality types (and the effect that these have on each other), the roles that people play, the history of the organisation and people's relationships, the stage of organisational and group development and sometimes of personal clashes or dislike.

As a leader you need to be aware of all that is happening under the surface and how it affects the relationships and therefore the health of the organisation and often the ability to achieve your purpose.

Story of Group Dynamics

You are the leader of a small community based organisation that runs an educare centre for orphans and vulnerable children. You and your group of volunteers have been doing this for the last 5 years. You have always been surrounded by a strong and dedicated team who are very passionate about their work.

In the last year, you received some money from the government to support your services. This was a very exciting move for the organisation and has meant that you can now pay stipends to your workers and grow your service. Because of this, you have hired some new community volunteers.

You realised that you would need more formal systems so that the new people would know what to do in the job, so you started with job descriptions and reporting systems. Some of the old staff seemed to really dislike this and are slow to start implementing. You notice over teatime that the new staff don't sit with the old staff and there is clearly, not a good relationship between them.

One of your most dedicated staff starts to challenge all the new systems and doesn't want to write any reports. He has been with the CBO the longest time and all the old staff sees him as a role model and guide. The new staff, however, has come to you to complain that he is bossy and is always telling them what to do.

The situation is at its worst when you try to organise a fundraiser for the centre and there is a big argument about who will do what on the day. Some of the staff get angry and say that they aren't going to attend anymore.

Individual activity

Analyse what is happening in the story – what do you think the dynamics are at play? What is happening in the stage of the group's development? What would you do about this situation as the leader of this organisation?

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Group Roles

An important part of understanding group dynamics, is to understand that people all have different personalities and approaches and that these differences often create conflict and tension in a group.

There are many different models that people use to understand personality types and how they affect each other and it is useful to learn more about these if you work a lot in teams or if you are a leader, as this will help you understand yourself and the group better.

We will discuss one model here which helps understand how different people behave in groups and particularly in conversations and discussions. It is called the Four Player System (adapted from David Kantoor, 1997) because these are all roles that we play at different times. However there is probably one that we more easily do – and that can be more dominant/ common for us to play.

These are the 4 different roles:

MOVER
Initiates Action
Proposes Ideas

OBSERVER
Reflects
Gives Feedback
Sees and names

SUPPORTER
Appreciates
Adds, Expands on

CHALLENGER
Opposes
Adds different views
Plays devil's advocate
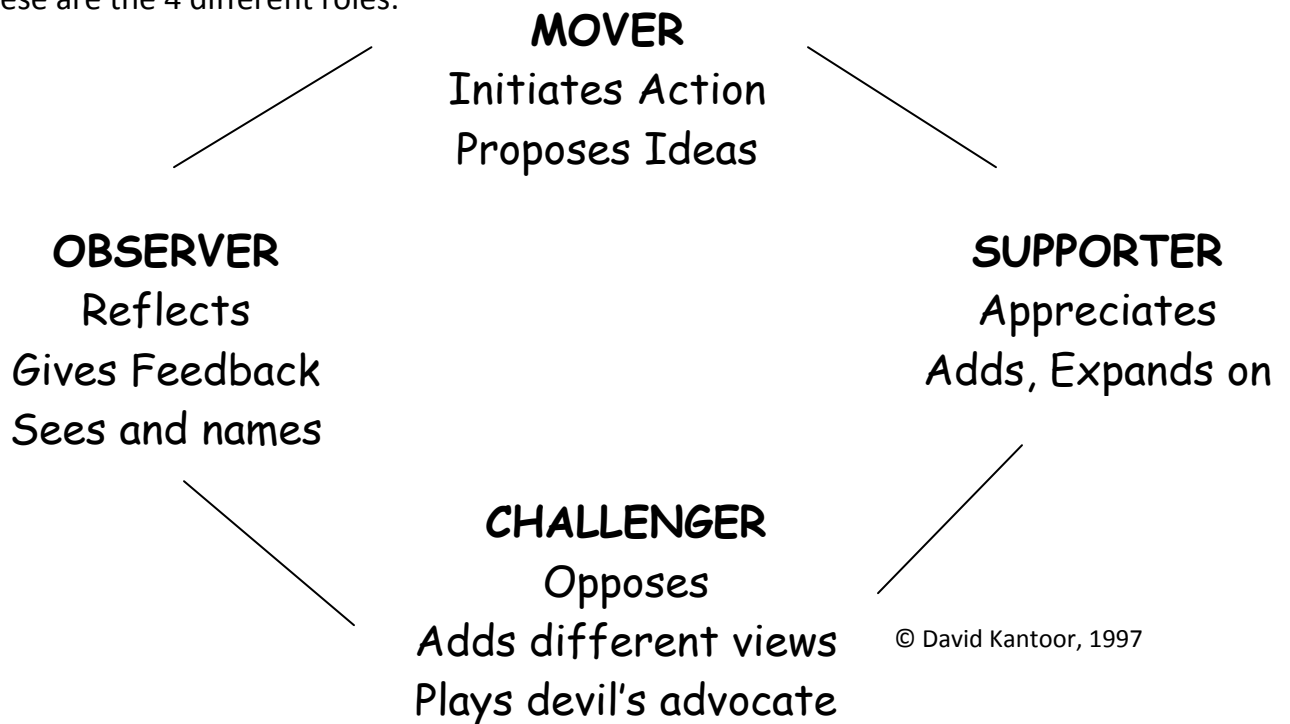
© David Kantoor, 1997

Individual activity

Which of these roles do you play more regularly in your work environment? Is it different from what you do at home or in your personal environment?

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What is important to understand is that every personality dynamic has a shadow side. This is a part that makes that type of personality difficult for other people to get on with sometimes and/ or come into conflict with others. It is important that we understand our own and other's shadows so that we know how to handle this.

FOUR PLAYER SYSTEM: INTENTIONS & IMPACTS

ROLE	INTENTION	SOMETIMES COMES ACROSS AS:
MOVER	Direction	Omnipotent
	Clarity	Dictatorial
	Discipline	Impatient
SUPPORTER	Appreciation	Yes-person
	Loyalty	Pliant
	Compassion	Soft
CHALLENGER	Correction	Critical
	Integrity	Competitive
	Courage	Attacking/ Defensive
OBSERVER	Perspective	Disengaged
	Self-reflection	Withdrawn
	Name what they see	Judgemental

Processes to build healthy environments

Now that we know it is important to build a healthy environment in which people feel empowered and are able to participate positively in their work, what kind of things should we do as a leader to build this kind of work environment?

Group activity

As a leader, what can one do to build a healthy environment in an organisation?
Think specifically about:
- How you would build open and supportive environments
- And how you would facilitate agreement on group behaviour and conduct

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Here are some other ideas:

- Build ownership

- Engage all in mission, vision and values

- Make new people welcome

- Create a safe space for disagreement

- Encourage different viewpoints and be open to challenge

- Hold a non-judgemental standpoint and support others to do this too

- Give constructive feedback

- Co-create opportunities for people to work together

- Improve and facilitate good communication

- Create group/ social contracts and agreements

- Make relationship building a priority, not only task delivery

- Encourage appreciation and celebration for achievements and group performance

- Recognise individuals for their contributions

Self-test

You should be able to:

- Explain group development
- Identify possible group dynamics in a specific context
- Analyse different interests, perspectives and relationships among group members
- Describe processes to facilitate agreement on group behaviour and conduct
- Describe ways to build open and supportive group environments

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

DEVELOPING AN ORGANISATION

Organisations, like groups and people, also go through different stages of development and growth. As a leader we need to know about these stages so that we can understand what stage our organisation is in and what we need to do to support its development.

Story of Organisational Development!

Two women from the same street whose children had died of AIDS related illnesses decided to do something to help other mothers. They felt that if only they as parents can be involved they can save many lives amongst the youth. They thought the cultural barriers that hinder parents from speaking openly to their children about safer sexual practices are contributing negatively to the spread of HIV/AIDS. They decided as parents they will concentrate on awareness programs that will teach youth safer sexual practices. The one woman had a big house and one of the rooms was used for training. They started with the children from their street and soon their information sessions attracted a number of youth from the different streets and ultimately, the whole community.

A number of people within the community who were affected by the impacts of HIV/AIDS felt they needed to be involved with this project and soon the two women had eight volunteers. One day the project volunteers and leaders sat down and discussed the way forward for their project. They realized that the community is demanding more from them and that they have to make some decisions. The costs attached to their training had been money from donations from the local business people. The donations were no longer enough. They had heard that if they wanted to get funding they will have to be registered with the government. They decided to do it. They decided to try and become a formal structure.

They decided to call themselves Siyakuthanda AIDS Project. They now had a board

that was there to guide and support their work. The board realised that they needed to start implementing systems and policies to ensure the quality and standard of their work. When the women started with this, they struggled to get the volunteers to agree. They felt that these new systems were unnecessary and were because the board did not trust them.

One of the women became part of the board and some volunteers were also recruited to be part of the board. She was no longer a worker in the project and had to allow others to take over her jobs. The services of the project were very popular and they were invited to many other communities, churches and schools to conduct their talks.

The other woman was made manager to take over the running of the organisation while the board remained volunteers and less active in the daily activities of the organisation. This was a very difficult time for the organization as both women were very passionate about their work, having started the organization. The woman who was on the board, still had strong ideas about how the organisation should be run. The organization was nearly divided as the manager had her own ideas too. She put the staff into different project teams – and it seemed that the organisation became divided and was not working so well together anymore. The board was not always happy as they felt their project was changing unnecessarily and there was much time spent discussing and strategising together. Although this phase was so difficult, at the end of the 1 year the organization became so organised and professional that it started to receive funding.

Slowly the new structures became normal and everyone settled down to working together. A lot of work was done by the board with the staff about vision and mission and the team started to work well together again. There were still different project teams, but they now worked well together and were able to share and support each other's work.

Group activity

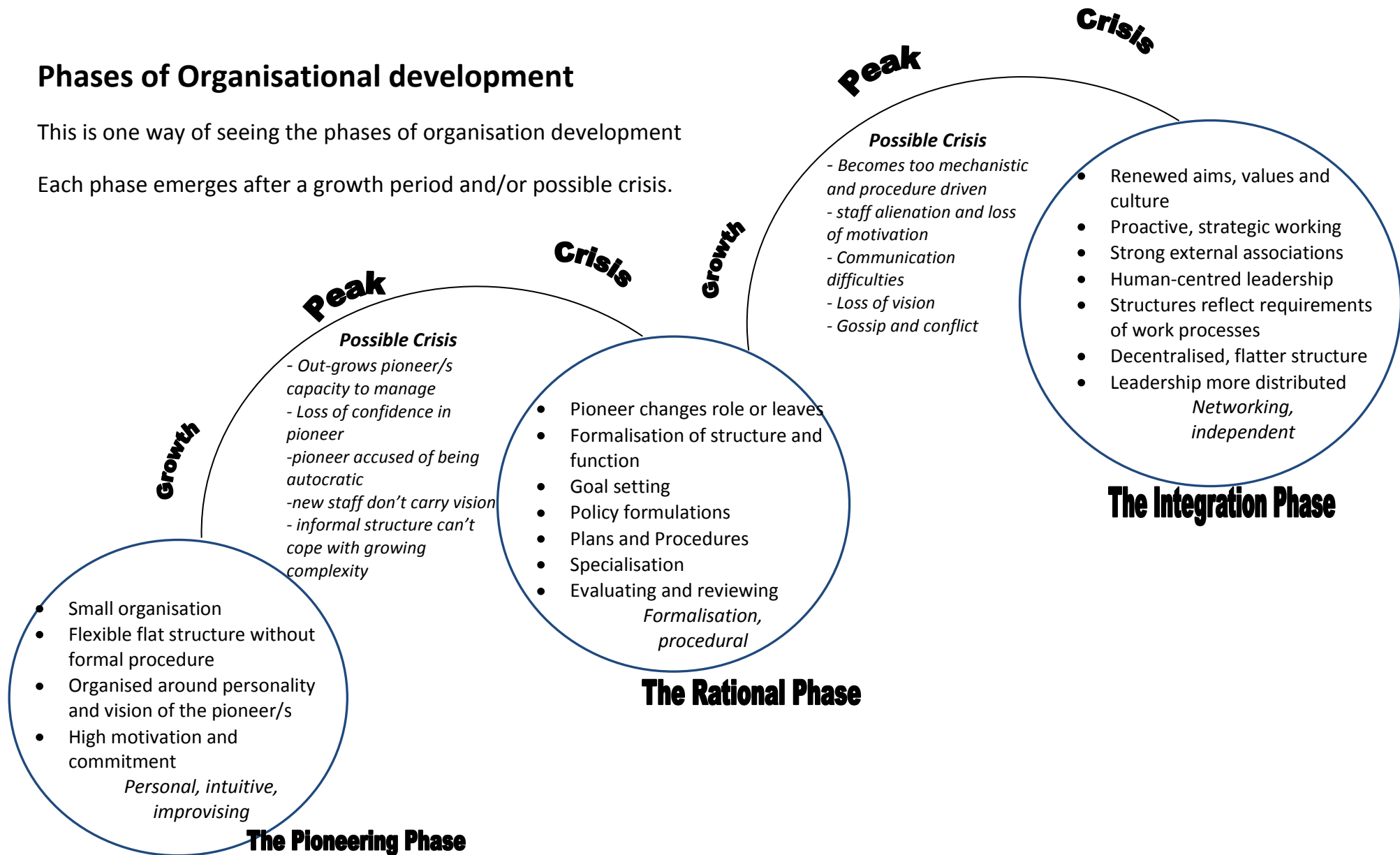When you read this story, what does this tell you about the organisations and their development?

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Group activity

Did you notice the organisation go through different stages? If so, what were these?

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Phases of Organisational development

This is one way of seeing the phases of organisation development

Each phase emerges after a growth period and/or possible crisis.

Peak · **Crisis** · **Growth**

Possible Crisis
*- Becomes too mechanistic
and procedure driven
- staff alienation and loss
of motivation
- Communication
difficulties
- Loss of vision
- Gossip and conflict*

- Renewed aims, values and culture
- Proactive, strategic working
- Strong external associations
- Human-centred leadership
- Structures reflect requirements of work processes
- Decentralised, flatter structure
- Leadership more distributed
  *Networking,
  independent*

The Integration Phase

Peak · **Crisis** · **Growth**

Possible Crisis
*- Out-grows pioneer/s
capacity to manage
- Loss of confidence in
pioneer
-pioneer accused of being
autocratic
-new staff don't carry vision
- informal structure can't
cope with growing
complexity*

- Pioneer changes role or leaves
- Formalisation of structure and function
- Goal setting
- Policy formulations
- Plans and Procedures
- Specialisation
- Evaluating and reviewing
  *Formalisation,
  procedural*

The Rational Phase

- Small organisation
- Flexible flat structure without formal procedure
- Organised around personality and vision of the pioneer/s
- High motivation and commitment
  *Personal, intuitive,
  improvising*

The Pioneering Phase

Although every organisation is different with its own particular circumstances, there are certain similarities or phases that most organisations go through. The model above describes one view of how organisations develop.

Organisations are often started by one *pioneer* – a person with a very strong motivation and vision about how and what the organisation needs to be, and often a deep commitment to the aims and purpose of the organisation. This person then draws in other dedicated people (often volunteers) who support the vision and follow their charismatic leader.

Over time as the organisation grows and develops, the work starts getting more complex and the informal structure can no longer cope with the new requirements. This or other developments create tension or stress in the organisation – sometimes called a *crisis* – and from this the next stage is born.

The next stage is the more **Rational phase** – the beginning of implementing systems and procedures so that the organisation can run easier and that if the pioneer were to leave, the organisation could run on its own. The changes that are part of this next phase, often meet with some resistance as people sometimes see it as making the organisation too 'mechanistic' and losing its human quality. Once the organisation develops in this phase, there will be a further *crisis* that will move it towards the next phase of development – the **Integration phase**.

This movement from phase to phase is never certain. Some organisations stay pioneer organisations forever and never reach the crisis that requires them to change. For their organisation, this could be totally appropriate.

However once the organisation starts to show some of the signs of crisis and difficulty mentioned above, this is often a sign that the organisation needs to

develop into the next phase. It is the responsibility of all members but particularly of the leader to recognise what phase the organisation is in, and what needs to happen to help that organisation develop and grow to the next phase.

Group activity

What do you think you should do as a leader at each stage of organisational development to support the growth of the organisation?

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Individual activity

Which stage do you think your organisation is in and what might it need to develop? What processes could you put in place to help with reflection and learning in your organisation?

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Self-test

You should be able to:

- Identify stages of organisational development and their challenges
- Analyse an organisation in terms of its current stage of development and the possible group dynamics
- Discuss the needs of different organisations and suggest interventions
- Discuss some processes to reflect and learn within organisations

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Case study

Babalwa is a nurse at a local hospital and an enthusiastic member of the local community, and various local organisations. At a community meeting it is proposed that a group be set up to run a proposed development project in the local district. Babalwa is an obvious candidate to lead this group because of her experience and involvement. The NGO that is setting up the project asked Babalwa if she will do it and she agreed.

After a few weeks, the group has shrunk in size and is much smaller than when it started. Those who have left the group complain to their friends that Babalwa is rather controlling as a leader, talks too much and doesn't listen to the points of view of others. One person even complains to the NGO representative but he is too busy to follow up. At the next community meeting it is noted with sadness that Babalwa's group has broken up and the project cancelled.

This story shows the need for good consultative leadership but also for effective communication as leaders and in community organisations. A leader has the responsibility to communicate well but also to develop good communication between the group members too.

A key to good leadership and effective communication is the ability, to listen well, to make space for others to participate and ask for feedback (be open to receiving) and giving feedback even if it is hard.

Communicating as a leader

Good communication is one of the most important skills that a leader can have. This does not just mean being able to speak well and explain oneself well, but just as importantly it means being able to listen well and respect the opinions and views of others.

The quality of the attention we give others when they are speaking (how well we listen), is directly related to how well they are able to think. The better the quality of our listening, the better people are able to think. They will feel safer to share their opinions and ideas. Nancy Kline wrote about this in what she called *Thinking Environments* – places where people could really think well and how to create this.

Below are some of the principles of the Thinking environment. These are all principles that we as leaders should try and use in our daily communication.

- **Attention** - Listen with real respect and genuine interest, and without interruption
- **Equality** - Treat each other as thinking equals. Give equal turns and attention
- **Ease** - Offer freedom from internal rush or urgency
- **Appreciation -** Practice a 5:1 ratio of appreciation to criticism
- **Encouragement** - Give people courage to think
- **Feelings -** Allow sufficient emotional release to restore thinking
- **Diversity** - Welcome different thinking, ideas, and diverse group identities
- **Place** - Create a physical environment that says to people - 'You matter.'

© Nancy Kline *Time to Think*

Group activity

Choose 3 of the principles above to teach the rest of the group so that they will understand what it means.

Misunderstandings in Communication

So often conflict and difficult situations arise from miscommunication – times when people do not understand each other properly or make assumptions about what other people are saying without checking if they have understood properly. Below is a short story that illustrates these misunderstandings that happen based on our worldviews (the way we see and understand the world).

Moishe and the Pope

About a century or two ago, the Pope decided that all the Jewish people had to leave Rome. Naturally, there was a big uproar from the Jewish community.

So, the Pope made a deal. He would have a religious debate with a member of the Jewish community. If the representative won, the Jews could stay. If the Pope won, the Jews would leave. The Jews realized that they had no choice. They looked around for a champion who could defend their faith, but no one wanted to volunteer. It was too risky. So, in desperation, they finally picked an old man named Moishe, who spent his life sweeping up after people, to represent them. Being old and poor, he had less to lose, so he agreed. He asked only for one condition to the debate. Not being used to saying very much as he cleaned up around the settlement, he asked that neither side be allowed to talk. The Pope agreed.

The day of the great debate came. Moishe and the Pope sat opposite each other for a full minute before the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Moishe looked back at him and raised his index finger. The Pope waved his hand in a circle around his head. Moishe pointed to the ground where he sat. The Pope pulled out a communion wafer and a glass of wine. Moishe pulled out an apple.

The Pope stood up and announced, "I give up. This man is too good. The Jews may stay.'
An hour later, the cardinals were all around the Pope asking him what happened. The Pope
said, "First, I held up three fingers to represent the Trinity. He responded by holding up
one finger to remind me that there was still one God common to both our religions. Then, I
waved my hand around me to show him that God above was all around us. He responded
by pointing to the ground, showing that God was also right here with us, in our midst. I
offered the wine and the wafer to show that God absolves us from our sins. He pulled out
an apple to remind me of original sin. He had an answer for everything. What could I do?"
Meanwhile, the Jewish community had crowded around Moishe, amazed that this old,
somewhat feeble man had done what all their scholars had insisted was impossible! "What
happened?", they asked. "Well," said Moishe, "first he said to me that the Jews had three
days to get out of the city. I told him that not one of us was leaving. Then, he told me that
this whole city must be cleared of Jews! I let him know that we were staying right here."
"And then?" asked a woman. "I really don't know," said Moishe. "He took out his lunch, so
I took out mine."

Although this story has a positive outcome, often we are not so lucky when we don't communicate properly. We each have our own worldview – the way we see the world, and it is normally different to other people's.

This is why we always need to check our understanding with others, make sure that we are not making assumptions and give feedback to those around us to ensure that we are all understanding each other. As leaders we also need to develop humility about our views and opinions – to know that there are different ways of doing and seeing things and that ours is not the only right way.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Another important part of good communication is the ability to be able to give good, non-threatening and constructive feedback to others AND to be able to receive feedback yourself openly and without getting defensive.

Below is a tool that one can use for giving feedback – it makes use of I-statements so that it is not too threatening, and helps identify the feelings that you have about

the situation as well as the assumptions that you have made about the other person.

One has to be **really** careful when giving feedback that one is non-judgmental and that one has the humility to realise that even if you were hurt, it is only your opinion. You also need to have compassion for the other person to whom you are giving feedback to. Remember that they are also a human who makes mistakes and has a different world view to you.

This is why this is called the Compassionate feedback model.

Compassionate Feedback Model

"WHEN I (hear, see) ……"
Describe the behaviour – just the facts as specifically as possible without judgement or exaggeration

"I FEEL (happy, sad, angry, afraid)…."
Say how you feel – tell how their behaviour affects you.

"BECAUSE I (assume, believe, think)…."
Give your assumption that led you to feel the way you do

------Pause here for discussion to hear their thoughts-----

"I WOULD LIKE….."
Ask for what you would like in the future – changes you would like to see

"WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Then Listen again

Individual activity

Think about a situation that you have at work or at home, where you really need to give some difficult feedback to another person. Use the feedback model to practise writing what you would say to that person.

"WHEN I (hear, see) ……"

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"I FEEL (happy, sad, angry, afraid)….

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"BECAUSE I (assume, believe, think) THAT…."

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------Pause here for discussion to hear their thoughts-----

"I WOULD LIKE….."

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"WHAT DO YOU THINK?

To practise properly, you should now role play this with someone to see if you have done a good job – ask them to check if you are being judgemental and open!

Conditions for Feedback

Feedback is never easy to give well, nor is it often easy to receive. To do it properly we have to make sure that there are certain conditions in place that would make it easier for someone to hear and receive.

Group activity

What do you think the conditions for giving and receiving feedback are?

Giving Feedback:

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Receiving Feedback:

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Below are some ideas of other possible conditions. For giving feedback:

- Always ask for permission first – don't force someone to hear feedback

- Make sure the timing is right for both parties

- Choose a good place – that is safe, private and appropriate

- Be compassionate - ask yourself: "how might the other person be feeling?"

- Assume that you could be misinterpreting what happened

- Get your emotions under control

- Only give feedback about things that the person can change

- Use I-statements and be specific

REMEMBER: Giving feedback is never easy, but if done well, it isn't unpleasant and can be valuable.

For receiving feedback:

- Try to accept the feedback without becoming angry or defensive

- Remember it has taken courage for the person to speak up – be thankful!

- If the feedback involved a group – check if the whole group felt this way.

- Use the information – reflect, learn and change if necessary!

Self-test

You should be able to:

- Listen attentively, communicate in an open way and learn from others
- Show cultural sensitivity and confidentiality when dealing with others
- Identify situations where feedback is needed and give and receive feedback
- Know some considerations for giving difficult feedback

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Conflict is a natural part of life and relationships. As we know from group development, most groups go through a storming phase – a time of conflict. If there is no conflict, it can mean that no-one feels safe enough to say difficult things or to speak out about issues because there is not enough trust.

Sources of conflict

Group activity

What are some of the possible sources of conflict in an organisation?

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In any conflict situation there are the presenting needs – those that are expressed and spoken about - and then there are the underlying needs. These are the deeper needs that need to be addressed if the conflict is to be resolved.

To resolve any conflict, we need to believe in win-win. This is the idea that it is possible to find a solution in which both parties win. Our old way of thinking is that conflict normally ended in win-lose. Someone had to lose. Win-win solutions are

possible but they take time and effort to search for a solution in which everyone gains something.

A story of two colleagues

Cindy and Themba have been working together for over a year. In the last month Cindy was promoted to team leader of Themba's team. Since then there has been constant tension and arguments between them.

They finally come to see you in your office, complaining about each other and how they can no longer work together. Themba says that Cindy is bossy and controlling and always interferes in his work. Cindy says that Themba never listens and doesn't appear to want to do his job. You are left to facilitate this difficult situation.

As a leader you need to try and identify these underlying needs as they will help you resolve the conflict.

In any conflict situation it helps to ask yourself these questions:

- What was the need of the individuals (presenting need and deeper need)?
- What was the need of the organisation?
- What was the essence of the conflict?
- What is an alternative (or third option) that you can think of that is win-win?
- How can you use the conflict to build the organisation?

Managing Conflict

There are many different ways of handling conflict and one can spend a lot of time learning different models and tools. Important to all of them is to:

- Try to understand the deeper needs
- Give people a chance to express themselves
- Listen deeply and attentively
- Create safe environments to speak about it
- Ensure confidentiality
- Look for win-win solutions

What is important as a leader is to spend time thinking about what systems and processes one can put in place to prevent conflict from happening or for ensuring that when it does happen, it can happen in a positive way.

Group activity

What systems or processes should be put in place in our organisation to prevent conflict? What can a leader do, to prevent or minimise conflict situations?

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Self-test

You should be able to:

- Identify and discuss the sources of conflict
- Describe some methods of dealing with conflict
- Demonstrate a tolerant and non-judgemental approach
- Describe some practical examples of successful conflict resolution

Please ask your facilitator if you are unsure of any of the above.

PLANNING MY AND MY ORGANISATION'S DEVELOPMENT

In this manual we have learnt a number of things about our organisations and about the role of a leader in supporting the development of an organisation. As a leader it is important to reflect often on the development of your organisation and of yourself and be able to rate both of these. Planning for the development of your organisation should go hand-in-hand with planning for your own development as a leader.

Individual activity

Reflecting on your leadership:

- What are your strengths as a leader?
- What are some of your fears and vulnerabilities?
- What do you think you need to develop as a leader?
- How do you plan to do this?

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Notes

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