

## Seven Personal Qualities Found In A Good Leader

- A good leader has an exemplary character. It is of utmost importance that a leader is **trustworthy** to lead others. A leader needs to be trusted and be known to live a life of honesty and integrity. A good leader **"walks the talk"** and in doing so earns the right to have responsibility for others. True authority is born from respect for the good character and trustworthiness of the person who leads.
- A good leader is **enthusiastic** about her or his work or cause and also about her or his role as a leader. People will respond more openly to a person of passion and dedication. A leader needs to be able to be a source of inspiration, and be a motivator towards the required action or cause. Although the responsibilities and roles of a leader may be different, the leader needs to be seen to be part of the team working towards the goal. This kind of leader will not be afraid to roll up sleeves and get dirty.
- A good leader is **confident**. In order to lead and set direction a leader needs to appear confident as a person and in the leadership role. Such a person inspires confidence in others and draws out the trust and best efforts of the team to complete the task well. A leader who conveys confidence towards the proposed objective inspires the best effort from team members.
- A leader also needs to function in an orderly and purposeful manner in situations of uncertainty. People look up to the leader during times of uncertainty and unfamiliarity and find reassurance and security when the leader portrays confidence and a positive demeanor.
- A good leader is tolerant of ambiguity and remains calm, composed and steadfast in achieving the main purpose. Storms, emotions, and crises come and go, and a good leader takes these as part of the journey and keeps a cool head.
- A good leader, while keeping the **main goal in focus**, is able to **think analytically**. Not only does a good leader view a situation as a whole, but is able to break it down into sub-parts for closer inspection. Not only is the goal in view but a good leader can break it down into manageable steps and make progress towards it.
- A good leader is **committed to excellence**. Second best does not lead to success. The good leader not only maintains high standards, but also is proactive in raising the bar in order to achieve excellence in all areas.

Source: *Barbara White, Seven Qualities of a Good Leader, 2005*

## LEADERSHIP

**Leadership** is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

Strong leadership is essential in effective organizing. It can make or break an organization. Strong organizations are identified with strong leaders who work collectively and represent the organization to contribute to the success of the group.

Leaders may be elected or appointed, or may work in the spirit of volunteerism. A leader leads the group in educating and awareness raising. The role of a leader is similar to that of an organizer in that the leader is a good motivator to make people work towards their common goals and objectives.

Source: *WIEGO. Organizing in the Informal Economy: Resource Books for Organizers: Building And Maintaining A Democratic Organisation of Informal Workers, Book 2*

**"Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential."**

*- Warren Bennis, Pioneer of Contemporary Leadership Studies, Prof at USC,*

## Who is a LEADER?

A leader is the inspiration and director of the action. She/he is the person in the group who possesses the combination of personality and leadership skills that moves others to follow her/his direction. A leader exerts effort to influence, motivate and inspire, helps others realize their potential, and leads by example with selflessness to make a difference in the lives of others.

**"Leadership" and "management" is oftentimes used interchangeably, referring to an organization's management structure as its leadership, or to individuals who are actually managers as the "leaders" of various management teams.**



## LEADERSHIP and CAPACITY BUILDING for WOMEN

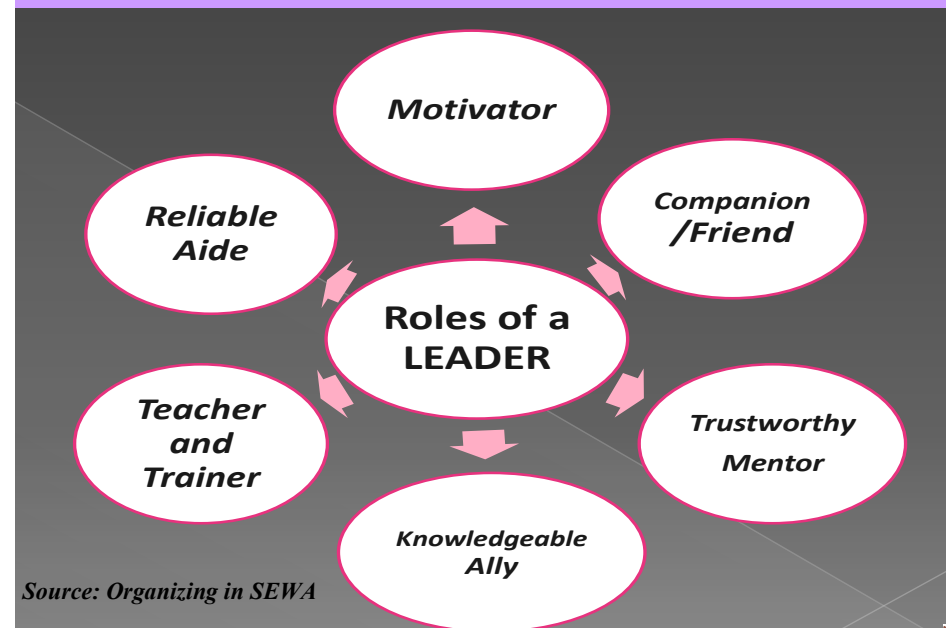
Capacity building is a **process** of building **knowledge, skills** and **capabilities** in women. It is a slow but steady progression of women from a state of being vulnerable to a state where they develop a **critical consciousness** towards the world in and around them. Capacity building helps a woman individually to become an **informed being, participating** in family decision making, **contributing** to the society through her work and at large in nation building, which would otherwise be impossible. (Source: SEWA Learning Academy, Modules and Presentation Materials on Organizing, Leadership and Communications)

Capacity building in SEWA started with training activities to build confidence of members, leaders, and organizers which oftentimes were informal. Women have a depository of knowledge and skills that SEWA recognizes and needs to enhance. It is a slow process because poor women are mostly illiterate, multiple burdened and face social pressures. But women understand the process after training. They understand their contribution to the economy whether they are bidi rollers, incense workers or a garments sewers.

PATAMABA in the Philippines conducts capacity building programs for rural and urban women workers through leadership orientation, skills training and organizational management.



## Roles of a LEADER .....



Source: Organizing in SEWA

Good leadership is intrinsically proactive in making the choices about where the organization is heading and how it will respond to the challenges faced along the way. Good leaders are not only proactive themselves, but also build a proactive attitude within the organization.

**Delegation** is a vital skill for leaders. Genuine delegation leads to a team or group owning its success and increasing its capacity for achievement. Yet letting go of control can be hard for a leader. However, the best leaders are those who are able to develop the next line of leaders— having a good succession plan for the next generation of leaders is essential in any organization to maintain and sustain its activities towards achieving its mission and vision.



## THE SIX ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

- Sets high standards
- Live your standards and mentor those who follow
- Create and share a vision
- Make the hard choices when necessary
- Be visible and out front
- Instill hope in those who follow

Source: John Di Frances, *The Six Essential Leadership Attributes*, 2005.

## LEADER'S ROLES

- COACH
- VISIONARY
- MOTIVATOR
- STRATEGIST
- TEAMBUILDER/TEAM PLAYER

sets the best  
direction for the  
organization

Source: SEWA Learning Academy, *Modules and Presentation Materials on Organizing, Leadership and Communications*

## Why Build Capacity?

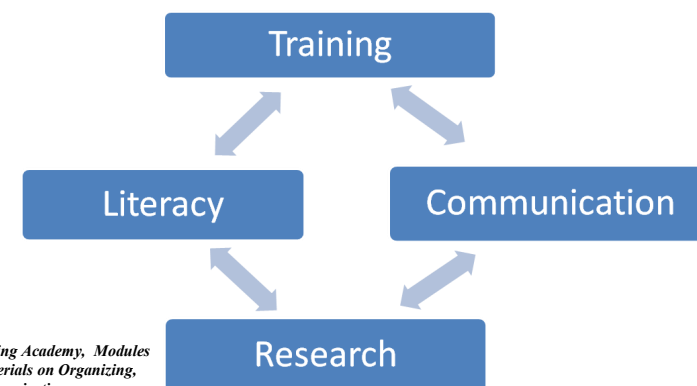
Capacity building emphasizes the need for women to be organized towards self reliance

- To develop leadership qualities
- To help women understand and acknowledge the power of collective struggle
- To build their capacity, including both technical as well as managerial skills
- To transfer professional knowledge at grassroots level
- To promote women's own economic organizations
- To learn by sharing information and experiences
- To develop the overall capacity of the participants through an integrated program

(Source: SEWA Learning Academy Presentation Materials on Leadership and Capacity Building)

## How capacity building is done...

SEWA Academy collates the knowledge resource from its members that come from their life and work experiences and is illustrated in the diagram below. This rich knowledge source is further formalized in the forms of training for sensitizing new and existing members, leaders and organizers; functional literacy for educating members; research as a basis for advocacy activities relevant to members' needs and demands for policy makers; and communication tools used for awareness generation.



Source: SEWA Learning Academy, *Modules and Presentation Materials on Organizing, Leadership and Communications*

## Collective Leadership

One of the principles of a democratic worker organisation is collective leadership. In practice, you often find that informal worker associations have powerful, charismatic leaders who act alone. This may be a result of cultural norms (leader is accepted as the authority figure who takes decisions for the people) or self-interest (leadership means control and access to money, resources and power). Your members and your leaders/potential leaders may be used to this leadership model and style. Existing leaders may resist change. Members may be afraid, or not interested to challenge it. You will need to carefully argue the case for collective leadership. Point out its advantages to existing leaders, but more importantly, to the members. Where you are organising informal workers into an established union, informal worker representatives should be part of the leadership collective.

**“Combat the spirit of the big man”. “Combat the spirit of closed circles”. (Amilcar Cabral)**

*Source: WIEGO. Organizing in the Informal Economy: Resource Books for Organizers: Building And Maintaining A Democratic Organisation of Informal Workers, Book 2*

Collective leadership is **strong leadership** because it:

- Combines everyone's ideas, creativity, experience
- Makes the best use of each person's skills and strengths
- Provides mutual support
- Shares power
- Shares responsibility
- Apportions praise
- Facilitates transparency
- Combats corruption and abuse of power
- Combats individualism
- Strengthens the leadership capabilities of everyone in the group.



“Collective leadership means leadership made by a group of persons and not by one individual alone or by some persons in the group”.

## LEADERSHIP STYLES

**DIRECTIVE BEHAVIOR** is defined as the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication; spells out the follower's role and tells the follower what to do, where to do it, when to do it, how to do it; and closely supervises performance.

**SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIOR** is defined as the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the follower in decision-making.(Blanchard & Hershey )

Good leaders are said to be those who can **DELEGATE** the tasks to enable the next line of leaders to get a feel of how it will be when the time comes to take over leadership in the organization.

**COACHING** differs from mentoring because it is more task oriented. Coaching is a one-on-one approach to guide depending on the pace of learning.

A combination of any of these four leadership styles may be applicable to an individual or group on a situational basis.(Source: Leadership Training Manual for Women Leaders of Cooperatives, ILO, 2005)

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## SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Supportive Behaviour	Low	<b>STYLE 3</b> <b>SUPPORTING</b> <b>(S3)</b>	<b>STYLE 2</b> <b>COACHING</b> <b>(S2)</b>
	High	<b>STYLE 4</b> <b>DELEGATING</b> <b>(S4)</b>	<b>STYLE 1</b> <b>DIRECTING</b> <b>(S1)</b>
		Low	High
		Directive Behaviour	



### Check List: Qualities of an effective leader of homebased and informal workers....I am... ✓

Committed to organisational objectives, policies and values	
Committed to serving the interests of the members	
A person who understands and is close to the members	
Honest and sincere	
Respectful of other peoples' opinions	
Fair when dealing with people of different sex, religion, colour and politics	
A person who listens to what members say and acts on their mandates	
Able to work collectively and contribute as part of a group	
Able to inspire and influence others	
Willing to accept responsibility	
Ready to admit mistakes and to learn from them	
Gender sensitive and committed to the empowerment of women	
Confident of myself and the members	
Cool, calm and composed under pressure	
Tactful, diplomatic and humble	
Brave, and able to defend myself and my organisation	
Full of initiative, drive and energy	
<b>I do not...</b>	
Talk too much	
Consider myself an expert on all subjects	
Dominate other peoples' way of thinking	
Manipulate to serve my own interests	
Misuse the resources of the organisation	
Consider myself a leader for life!	

(WIEGO. *Organizing in the Informal Economy: Resource Books for Organizers: Building And Maintaining A Democratic Organisation of Informal Workers, Book 2*).

## Leadership from below

Collective leadership also means leadership that is spread throughout an organization and not just at the top. A democratic organization has many layers of leaders. Grassroots leaders are the direct link between members and top leaders and the organisers and staff. They are tomorrow's "top" leaders.

Women are often excluded from leadership positions for many reasons: they lack confidence; the belief that leaders should be men; gender stereotyping designating women in household chores. However, women proved to be very effective leaders if given the chance. SEWA is a most successful union of informal workers in the world having only women as members and leaders.



Source: WIEGO. *Organizing in the Informal Economy: Resource Books for Organizers: Building And Maintaining A Democratic Organisation of Informal*

## Key Leadership Criteria

- A leader must show strong and genuine commitment to the organisation.
- A leader must always be true to the organisation's mandate.
- A leader must be able and prepared to work collectively.
- A leader must be honest, open and principled.
- A leader must be genuinely gender sensitive

## Impact of Leadership Training: The SEWA Experience

- Increase in self confidence
- Fearlessness
- Assertiveness
- Ability to articulate
- Outspokenness
- Future orientedness
- Resistance to violence
- Giving importance to education

"Leadership cannot be imposed from above. It must blossom from below so that the organisation can remain dynamic, effective and unified".

(SEWA Academy)

(Source: SEWA Academy, Presentation Material on Grassroots Leadership Development)



While there are people who seem to be naturally endowed with more leadership abilities than others, people can learn to become leaders by improving particular leadership skills. "Leadership is a winning combination of personal traits and the ability to think and act as a leader, a person who directs the activities of others for the good of all. Anyone can be a leader..."

The way a team is led will have a major impact upon the success or failure of the team. Members look up to a leader and will often identify several values they would want a leader to hold :

- ✓ **commitment to people and the corresponding task is the first key element in becoming an effective leader;**
  - ⇒ Members are primarily concerned about relationship and about being valued as a team member. Feeling secure in a group environment is an important pre-requisite to ensure members' individual contribution and commitment to the group and organization.
- ✓ **desire to support and serve the team as well as lead from the front;**
  - ⇒ Members want to see the ability to lead from the front and they are also strongly motivated by the ability to lead from the back! There is a balance to be struck between a willingness to take on any chores that need to be done by the team, and taking an inappropriate balance of roles so that the leadership is diminished.
- ✓ **enthusiasm, energy, inspiration and sufficient expertise to share;**
  - ⇒ Members want to be inspired and motivated by leadership which has the energy and enthusiasm to fire them up. However, they also want to feel secure that the leader has themselves, or has access to, the necessary expertise to lead the team in the right direction. The leader doesn't have to be the most knowledgeable of the subject at hand, but if they are not, they must encourage the input of others.
- ✓ **willingness to shoulder responsibility rather than pass the buck and blame others;**
  - ⇒ Leaders are tested under pressure. When challenges arise, they inevitably need to take responsibility to ensure that the team is stable and strengthened as a result. This does not mean that the leader should admit that issues beyond their control are in any way their fault, (although they should be honest in admitting their mistakes), but rather adopt a proactive stance to ensure the team is not deflected from its course.
- ✓ **ability to make the team come together to achieve more than being just a group of individuals.**
  - ⇒ Teams only become a team once there is some synergy within the group. The team process adds value to that which a disparate group of individuals would achieve undirected. This is likely to require the team leader to explore leadership models that share the leadership role within the team, to have an understanding of different individuals team roles, strengths and gifts, establish a mutual accountability within the team, and to create a team environment which is open, fun and allows healthy and productive discussion.

(Source: What makes a good team leader? The Teal Trust in <http://www.teal.org.uk/et/page5.htm>)

## Choosing Leaders: The Election Process

In an MBO or democratic workers' organization the members have a right and duty to choose their own leaders through an election process. Elected leaders in turn appoint others who also play leadership roles. Such "secondary" leaders are accountable to the elected leaders and through them to the members.

### The Election Process

- Members elect their own leaders.
- There is freedom from harassment or victimization.
- One member-one vote or a proportional vote (applies to organisations) is followed.
- No gender, race, religious, sexual orientation or other discrimination is evident.
- Confidentiality (unless otherwise agreed by voters or in terms of the constitution) is observed.



(Source: WIEGO. *Organizing in the Informal Economy: Resource Books for Organizers: Building And Maintaining A Democratic Organisation of Informal Workers*, Book 2)