

Topic 13. How to lead and build a Health Team?

A hand out from the project on “Integrated management of public health programmes at district level”

This project was developed by incorporating ideas, suggestions and contribution from an interactive participatory process of dialogue and consultation involving public health and multidisciplinary resource network drawn primarily from mainstream institutions and the civil society network in India.

A draft manual evolved covering the concepts and values Roles, Skills and Challenges and an Integrated Paradigm for the Public Health Management at District level. It also elaborates on, making a district diagnosis; organizing a health management information system; evolving a district plan; organizing an epidemiological surveillance system; responding to an epidemic and managing an outbreak; managing health programmes; managing human resources; organizing materials management; monitoring and evaluation; leading and building a health team; promoting, communicating and advocating for health; promoting and sustaining community partnerships; and building and sustaining partnerships with the educational sector; civil society, private sector and promoting an inter-sectoral collaboration.



**Developed by
Centre for Public Health and Equity, and its
associates, for the Society for Community Health
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Preface

This document is intended to serve as an evolving conceptual **framework for district level public health managers** in the health systems of the South East Asian countries. These managers, their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and openness to new challenges and new paradigms will remain one of the key determinants of the success of countries in reaching the **“Health For All”(HFA) vision** and the **Millennium Development Goals(MDG’s)**.

This document is a practical do it yourself workbook that draws upon some of the wealth of experience and resources in the past and present and tries to help district level managers address the complexities of today’s challenging global, national and local health situation and the emergence of new challenges and reemergence of older ones.

Readers are advised not to treat this document as a comprehensive manual but as **an evolving compilation of concepts in public health management**. This conceptual framework contains suggestions to tackle some of the problems, that the district level public health managers meet in their daily life as they lead, assess, respond, evaluate and learn from numerous health systems challenges. Where possible and feasible it directs the managers to other resources and materials that will provide them additional perspective and details (**see CD accompanying the manual**)

The authors/ facilitators have extensively worked in the community and have had decades of experience in supporting capacity building for public health/ community health in the main stream and civil society linked alternatives sector. They have also tried to draw upon the experience and the field-oriented perspectives of a network of public health capacity builders and trainers from the mainstream public health institutions and civil society training centers (**see list of contributors**).

This is **a work in progress**. The conceptual framework will, we expect, evolve into a guidebook that gets used and adapted by district level public health managers, trainers and supervisors of district level public health programmes. The document is expected to continue to evolve with the feedback from users making it more relevant, responsive, context specific and focused.

We see this document as the beginning of a new journey - **a journey of strengthening district level public health management**.

Dr Ravi Narayan
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13. Leadership and management for public health ^{1&2}

What is Leadership?

Leadership is a process or ability to influence the behaviour of others, to motivate and mobilize others to work together and achieve a common goal. It is a way of focusing and motivating a group of people to enable them to achieve their own aims and develop themselves. It also involves being accountable and responsible for the group as a whole.

Leadership is a function comprising of three factors: the leader, the group and the situations or conditions. Thus leadership is determined not only by the characteristics of the leader and the team but also by the situations that prevail in the programme or organization.

Leadership is defined as “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Leadership, Wiki, 2009).

There are many definitions of leadership. However, one common theme that runs through each of them is the ability to inspire confidence and support among the members of a group to achieve the programme goals. “Defining leadership has been challenging. The following sections discuss several important aspects of leadership including a description of what leadership is and a description of several popular styles of leadership”. The leadership is quite subjected to situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values, charisma, and intelligence among others.

Leadership and Management

It is important to understand the difference between management and leadership. While management deals with the administrative aspects i.e. planning, organizing, monitoring, leadership deals with the interpersonal aspects of a managers’ job i.e. inspiration, motivation and influence.

As a District Level Public Health Manager, you function both as a leader and a manager. The major responsibilities of a manager is to operate and maintain the organization efficiently, ensuring that it provides useful services to the community. Managers tend to be problem-solvers, seeking better ways to use their resources to get the job done. Effective managers bring order and consistency to programmes. Leaders, on the other hand, are pathfinders; they branch out more in their thinking. They are concerned with building the organization for the future, providing direction, securing new resources, developing new capacities, preparing the organization to meet challenges

and take advantage of emerging opportunities, adapting to change and networking.

| Leader | Manager |
|--|--|
| Visionary: focuses on the future and plans long term; asks “why” | Planner, organizer, coordinator: focuses on systems and structures; deals with short term and day-to-day issues; asks “how” and “when” |
| Strategist: pathfinder; sees ways to achieve goals; provides direction | Monitor: ensures that activities are implemented to standards |
| Policy-Maker Campaigner: promoter; activist; public relations; identifies new resources | Supervisor: directs; trains; solves problems |
| Team builder: empowers people; offers support; inspires trust | Efficient user of resources |
| Change agent: seeks out emerging opportunities; is prepared for change | Status-quoist (traditionalist); concerned with stability, continuity |
| Do the Right Thing | Do Things the Right way |

Source: Leadership and Strategic Management for TB Managers, Module-3, WHOSEARO-2008.

Qualities of both a manager and a leader are necessary. While performing managerial or administrative roles i.e. planning, organizing and controlling, managers are often called upon to take up leadership roles that deal with the interpersonal aspects of a manager’s job, i.e. inspiration, motivation and influence which may have a long-lasting impact on individuals and the group. A manager without leadership skills is an administrator, and a creative, far-sighted leader who is unable to implement a vision (i.e. without managerial skills) will confuse and lose the team.

While there may be only one or two designated leaders in an organization, such as the programme director or team leader, leadership qualities can be found in many others within the team.

Leadership styles

“Leadership style” is the style one uses as a leader to influence the behaviour of others. Leadership styles tend to vary considerably from situation to situation and it is not helpful to think of leadership styles as an either/or option. While the behaviour of some leaders is characterized mainly as directing their team activities in terms of task accomplishment (directive behaviour), other leaders concentrate on providing socio-emotional support and on building personal relations with their teams (supportive behaviour). In other situations, various combinations of directive and supportive behaviour were evident. Effective leadership calls for a greater understanding of people

and situations, as well as the ability to use the appropriate leadership style in a given situation.

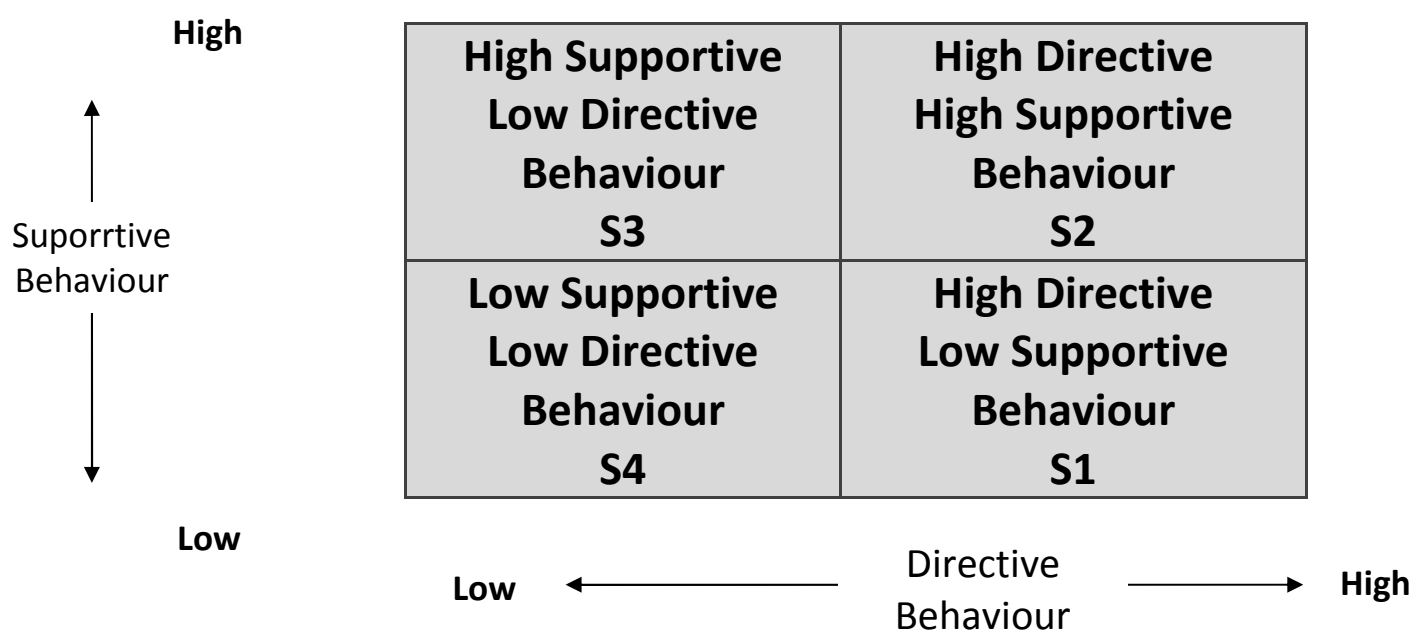
Directive behaviour:

A leader engages in one-way communication; spells out the groups' roles, and tells the group members what to do, where to do it, when to do it, how to do it and then closely supervises the performance. Three words can be used to define directive behaviour: 'structures, controls and supervises'.

Supportive behaviour:

A leader engages in two-way communication; listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the group in decision-making. Three words can be used to describe supportive behaviour: 'praises, listens and facilitates'. The emphasis on these behaviours can be high or low. The four quadrants of a situational model represent different leadership styles as follows:

Table 2: The four Basic Styles of leadership



Source: Leadership and Strategic Management for TB Managers, Module-3, WHOSEARO-2008

a) High directive/low supportive leader behaviour (S1)

This is referred to as the **directive style of leadership**. The leader defines the roles of members of a group and tells them what task to do and how, when, and where to do it. The leader alone initiates problem- solving and decision-making. Solutions and decisions are announced; communication is largely one-way, and the leader closely supervises implementation.

b) High directive/high supportive behaviour (S2)

This is referred to as the *coaching style of leadership*. The leader still provides a great deal of direction and leads with his or her ideas, but the leader also attempts to hear the group's feelings about decisions as well as their ideas and suggestions. While two-way communication and support are increased, control over decision-making remains with the leader.

c) High supportive/low directive leader behaviour (S3)

This is referred to as the *supportive style of leadership*. The focus of control for day-to-day decision-making and problem-solving shifts from the leader to members of the group. The leader's role is to provide recognition and to listen actively and facilitate problem-solving and decision-making on the part of the staff. This is appropriate where staff have the ability and knowledge to do the task.

d) Low supportive/low directive leader behaviour (S4)

This is referred to as the *delegating style of leadership*. The leader discusses the problems with members of the group until a joint agreement is achieved on the problem and ways to resolve it. Thereafter, the decision-making process is delegated totally. The group then has significant control on deciding how tasks are to be accomplished.

These four basic leadership styles are therefore characterized by varying degrees of directive and supportive behaviour. There is no *"best leadership style"*. Successful leaders are able to adapt their styles to fit the requirements of the team and the situation. However they may be using one style more often than others.

Development of teams with leadership

The style of leadership could be influenced by various factors such as timeframes, job and task demands, working environment, teamwork, and the skills and expectations of team members. The amount of direction or support that a leader will provide depends on the development level of the team for a specific task, function or objective that the leader is attempting to accomplish. Since the developmental level is task-specific, it is possible to assess the team according to the three key elements - competence, commitment and teamwork, for a specific task. Most of it depends on Competence Commitment and team work.

- **Competence** is a combination of knowledge and skills that can be gained from education training, and/or experience.

- **Commitment** is a combination of confidence and motivation. Confidence is a measure of a person's self-assuredness - a feeling of being able to do a task well without much supervision, while motivation will influence a person's interest and enthusiasm in doing it.
- **Teamwork** is reflected in the level of unity, ability to confront problems and collaboration existing within the group.

An assessment frame work is given below

Table 4: List of sample criteria

| Competence | Commitment | Teamwork |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Qualifications | Hardworking | Respect each other |
| Knowledge | Enthusiasm | Respect each other's roles |
| Proven skills | Motivation | Respect competence |
| Training | Punctuality | Good interaction |
| Experience | Loyalty | Share responsibilities and duties |
| Accuracy, speed | Confidence, leading to accepting challenging goals | Ready to share resources |
| Proven performance | Job satisfaction | Sense of ownership / belonging |
| Proper placement | Go beyond what is expected | Transparency |
| Need minimal support | Willing to overcome difficulties | Ability to resolve conflicts |
| Need minimal supervision | Turns in quality work always | Feel free to seek help from others |

Source: Leadership and Strategic Management for TB Managers, Module-3, WHOSEARO-2008.

Effective Management of Leadership styles

Competence, commitment and teamwork can be developed by appropriate inputs. As a leader of the team, it becomes the responsibility to develop the team. The following are suggestions of what you may do to develop or strengthen your team's competence, commitment or teamwork.

Building Competency

- Provide information relevant to roles and tasks.
- Build skills to perform the tasks effectively.
- Sustain and upgrade competencies through long-term training strategies.

Building Commitment – helping individuals realize the potential of their development

- Help individual members to set realistic and challenging goals.
- Support them to achieve this.
- Recognize their achievements through two-way feedback and rewards.
- Give them a sense of belonging.
- Motivate them to take ownership of the programme.

Team building

- Make teams responsible for various tasks.
- Allocate resources to them.
- Recognize the importance of teamwork through team rewards.
- Assign a high value to teamwork in performance appraisal systems.
- Design ways to reduce conflicts and increase collaboration.

Some suggestions:

- Become aware of your lack of flexibility in specific styles.
- Work in collaboration with your colleagues who have more flexibility in that style. Ask them to work with you to manage the situation and learn from them.
- Make special efforts to use that style and you may find that after a while your flexibility in that style increases.
- Assess carefully whether most members of your team know the area of their assignment and how well they know what is to be done.
- Do they have relevant skills and knowledge?
- Are they willing to take responsibility?
- Assess their level of synergy - do they work as a cohesive team, confronting and solving problems, and supporting each other?

References:

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| Further Reading on leadership and management |
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