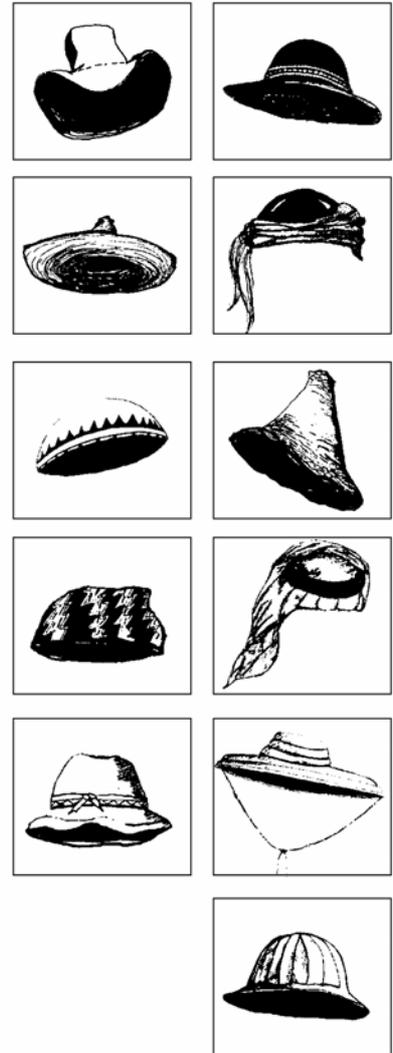


UN-HABITAT  
United  
Nations  
Human  
Settlements  
Programme

Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders

Training  
Materials  
Series

1



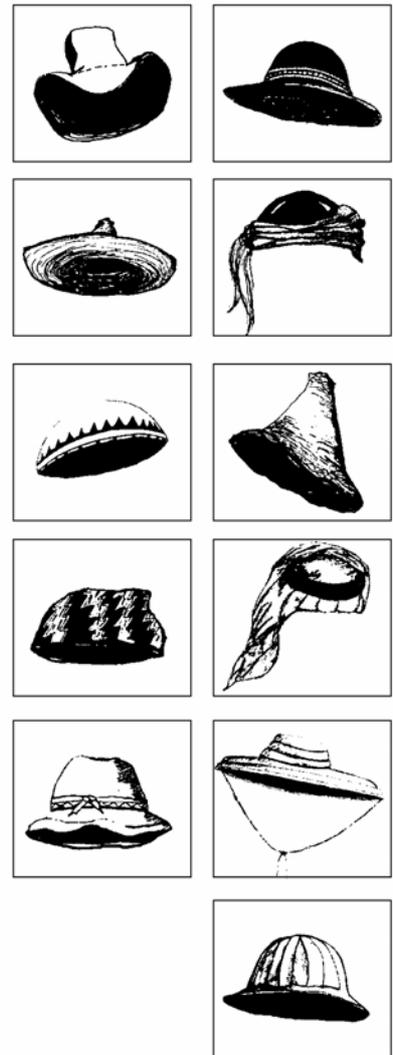
# Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders

Handbook 1

Training for Elected Leadership  
ISTANBUL, 1996 - "THE CITY SUMMIT"



**UN-HABITAT  
United  
Nations  
Human  
Settlements  
Programme**



# **Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders**

**Handbook 1**

**Training for Elected Leadership**

**Training  
Materials  
Series**

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



ISBN for complete set of 13 volumes: 92-131242-6  
ISBN for this volume: 92-1-131244-2  
HS/325/94E

## FOREWORD

As shown by results of training needs assessments conducted by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), training needs of local government elected officials (councillors), or of local politicians, appear among the most urgent world-wide and, at the same time, the least attended areas of capacity-building for local development and municipal management.

In the last few years, a number of countries as varied as Nepal and Poland or Uganda and Paraguay have embarked for the first time in several decades, and in some cases for the first time ever, on a process of electing their councillors and mayors. Training needs of local-government elected officials are also at the top of the agenda in established municipal democracies such as Ecuador, India, and the United States of America.

To respond to these needs, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has developed and tested a series of training handbooks to assist councillors to represent the citizens, provide civic leadership and effectively work with central government and with the management, technical, and professional staff in local authorities and other local institutions. The handbooks cover policy and decision making, communication, negotiation and leadership, attending, managing and conducting meetings, councillors' enabling and facilitating activities, financial management and other related needs.

This handbook, *Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders*, is one of the series of 12 and is intended for use primarily by trainers in national training institutions for local government or training units within local governments themselves. As an additional assistance for trainers using these handbooks, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has published a companion *Trainer's Guide for Training of Elected Officials* containing trainer's notes and information prepared exclusively for the benefit of these trainers in planning workshops for local elected officials based on the handbooks.

It is expected that this training handbook will contribute greatly to strengthening the capacity of local governments through the introduction of good Leadership leadership practices, one of the major objectives of the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



I wish to thank Dr. Fred Fisher and Mr. David W. Tees for preparing this and other handbooks in the series in collaboration with the staff of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) Training Section within the Centre's training programmes supported by the Government of the Netherlands. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of the trainers and local-government officials in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Kenya, Lithuania, Romania and Uganda who assisted in the field testing of these training materials.

Dr. Wally N'Dow  
Assistant Secretary-General  
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



## WHERE TO FIND IT IN THIS HANDBOOK

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	7
How to use these handbooks	9
<b>Part I</b> Perspectives on training and elected leadership	11
Definition	12
Summary	12
Reflection	14
Why train councillors?	15
Assumptions about the role of councillor	16
Assumptions about training councillors	17
Assumptions about leadership	17
The conceptual hat rack	19
Eleven roles and much more	24
The size of your constituency	25
The use of labels	25
Summary	26
References	26
<b>Part II</b> Introductory workshop	28
Overview	29
1.1 Warm-up exercise: getting to know you	30
1.2 Exercise: perceptions of role performance	31
1.3 Exercise: recognizing councillor roles	35
Appendix	36

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



## INTRODUCTION

Writing a handbook series such as this can become a very personal experience for those who are writing it. We found ourselves trying to “get into” your role as the elected official, the “councillor,” although we have never actually been elected to local office. We have worked for local governments in the past, in management roles, and our careers have been closely associated with the development of local governments and their human resources. Because of these long-term career commitments, we feel kinship with you in your efforts to serve your communities. For these and many more reasons, we want to begin this introductory handbook with a few notes of explanation that may be helpful to you.

You may already have noticed that we have written in “the first person.” We decided it would be easier, and hopefully more effective, to speak to you as a person rather than constantly referring to your role as “the elected official.” We hope you don’t mind our being personal.

Directing these handbooks specifically to you, the councillor, has one obvious drawback. It is also written for those who see their roles as encompassing opportunities to work with councillors in a developmental relationship. In other words, it’s also directed to local-government trainers. Because we are directing our efforts to two audiences, there will be times when we will need your patience and understanding as we direct our attention to the trainers in order to help them be more effective as they work with you and your colleagues.

We’re going to use “the councillor” to refer to all those individuals who serve local governments in an elected capacity. We realize that many of you have titles that are different, such as “mayor,” “commissioner,” “assembly person,” and others, but we’re going to refer to all of you as councillors. It makes the writing task easier and the reading a bit less tedious.

Finally, we plan to use the term “community” as a way of referring to the social institution that resides in the midst of your municipality. Not everything about “community” is positive. Communities can force conformity. Communities can be mean-spirited and uncaring towards those who are less fortunate. Nevertheless, there is a historical context about the concept of community that is important to the roles and responsibilities of the local elected leader. Cicero, more than two millennium ago, wrote, “A people is not just any collection of human beings brought together in any sort of way but an assemblage of people associated in an agreement with respect to justice and a partnership for the common good.” Election to local public office carries with it the responsibility of community building, the task of binding individuals together to accomplish shared goals and responsibilities, regardless of their economic status, gender, ethnic, religious or racial orientations, or political affiliations.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



“The disintegration of communities and the loss of a sense of community,” John Gardner reminds us, “are clearly detrimental to the accomplishment of group purpose.”<sup>(1)</sup> Without shared values and social coherence, the role of the local elected leader becomes much more difficult. Public decisions that foster community integration are resources that reap long-term rewards. Decisions that tear at the fabric of the community build barriers between leaders and their constituents. As public decision-makers, we hope you will share our concern that the local government you represent is not just a legal entity but a community of shared values that serves all the people within your midst.

*What sculpture is to a block of marble,  
learning is to the soul.*

*- Pakistani proverb*

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



## HOW TO USE THESE HANDBOOKS

These handbooks are designed to be used in three ways:

1. As self-study guides: We hope individual councillors will be motivated to pick up these handbooks and read them. To help you gain as much as possible from the handbook, we have included self-assessment exercises at the beginning and end of each of the handbooks. We also have interspersed some reflective-type questions in the text of each handbook to help the self-learner.
2. As workshop learning guides: By “workshop” we mean those councillors who come together from different locations to attend a learning event convened by someone else. They may, or may not, know each other. Their motivation is primarily individual learning.
3. As council team learning guides: This option involves the use of handbooks as guides to work with all members of one council in a learning situation. The primary objective of this mode is to help councillors become more effective as a legislative team. Individual learning is also a goal but designed to focus on its contribution to the efforts of the team.

These handbooks have also been designed to provide the trainer with as much flexibility as possible in helping councillors learn. For example, each handbook can be used independently of others. The trainer might decide to offer a three-hour workshop on negotiation skills at an annual conference of municipal officials. He or she could do this by using the training exercises in the handbook on *The Councillor as Negotiator*.

Some other examples of how the handbook series might be used to meet the learning needs of councillors are:

- A five-day workshop that includes about one half-day of training on each of the roles;
- A 10-day workshop that spends a day on each of the roles (this assumes the use of all learning exercises in the various handbooks);
- Five one-day workshops, scheduled over a longer period of time, that cover two of the roles in each of the one-day sessions;
- One or more council team-building sessions that focus on skill-building and problem solving activities to strengthen the council as a working team;
- Or, a combination of the above.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



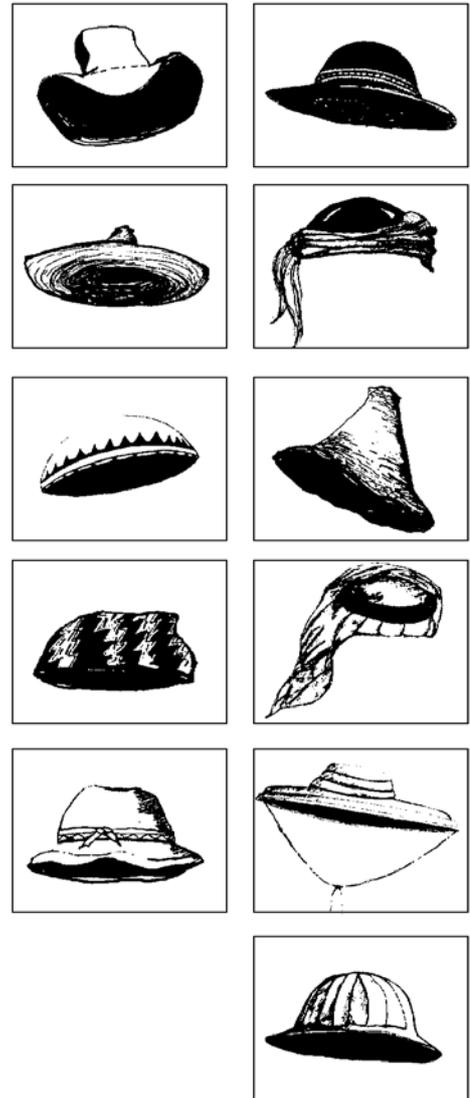
Effective trainers take into account not only the training needs of the councillors they will be working with, but the time and travel constraints of those being trained. And, effective trainers are creative in their use of the materials they have available. For example, a trainer might decide to offer the materials in these handbooks in a correspondence format. He or she might have those who “sign up” for such a course send written answers to the questions that are posed in the handbook essays or create a set of their own questions for the councillor to answer.

Or, the trainer might offer to meet with an interested group of councillors every Friday afternoon for several weeks to hold discussions on each of the topics covered in the handbook series. They may, or may not, decide to use the exercises that have been provided. We would, of course, encourage their use since we believe these exercises provide opportunities to learn through doing. These materials are designed to be manipulated to meet the needs of the trainer and the trainees. In this context, we encourage you to be creative.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**





## PART I

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



**ESSAY**

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

# Essay

## Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders

## Training for Elected Leadership



### Definition

**Perspective:** The interrelation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed.

### Summary

This handbook is designed to provide you with some basic information about these materials and to help you prepare for using them. For example, it includes assumptions about:

- Why the handbooks are needed,
- The role of the elected councillor,
- The training of councillors,
- Leadership,
- Some thoughts on the conceptual framework used to develop the materials,
- A brief summary about each of the councillor roles covered in the handbooks, and
- A few ideas on how to use the handbooks.

There is at least one school of thought that says the local-government challenge is hopeless, particularly in urban areas. And, we would be the first to admit the facts are very convincing. The urban population in developing countries is expected to increase by 66 per cent in the next 15 years. Nearly a quarter of those dwelling in urban areas in these countries, at the present time, live in absolute poverty. This puts a heavy burden on local resources and infrastructure, and the demand for more services and physical improvements grows daily. These demands come in the midst of environmental degradation, soaring crime rates, unemployment, deteriorating streets and drains, a shortage of schools and teachers, water pollution, traffic gridlock, the lack of basic housing opportunities, and municipal bankruptcies. The list of demands on local government in developing countries is virtually endless. It is little wonder that many believe the situation is hopeless.

On the supply side of the ledger, things don't look too optimistic either. Local governments are seen by many as weak and ineffective. There is hardly a resource in the local-government larder that measures up to the challenges these local institutions face. Never mind that the problems in your community grow daily. Whether it be funds, skilled human resources, materials, equipment, or even time, there is not enough of whatever it takes to go around. And, we haven't even mentioned crime, drugs, natural disasters, incompetent government employees, corrupt landlords who exploit your poor, impossible rules and regulations, rotting garbage in the streets, and, dare we mention AIDS.

Depressing, isn't it? But wait! For many of you, these depressing conditions are also the reasons you ran for council. You didn't get elected to public office to make things worse for you and your constituents. In fact, if you weren't the kind of person who sees the glass half full when others see it half empty, you would still be on the outside of local government looking in and

# Essay

lamenting that your local government isn't doing anything to change things for the better. Of course, there are a few individuals in your midst who see elected office as a way to use the position for personal gain, or to settle a grudge. We would be naive to think otherwise. We would also be naive to think that it will be easy to turn many of the deeply-seated problems of local government around. Or, that councils somehow have all the power and resources to do what needs to be done.

How often have you said to yourself, "Can I really make a difference in the way my municipality is governed and managed?" Fortunately, individuals can make a difference in the life of their communities. There is no place where this mark of individual leadership is more evident than Curitiba, Brazil. In this city of 1.6 million people, Mayor Jaime Lerner has accomplished amazing results by performing the matchmaker role between necessity and possibility. Let's look at some of the offspring from these marriages. <sup>(2)</sup>

**GARBAGE!** Mayor Lerner and his citizens don't let it pile up in the streets and alleys of Curitiba. They recycle it. But, recycling garbage doesn't just happen. Everyone must get into the act if it's going to work. The Mayor went on television to sell his programme and to teach the citizens how to carry out their individual responsibilities. Lerner also initiated a "goods for garbage" programme in the slums, swapping garbage for transit passes and food to entice neighbourhood associations to get involved. The city hired the homeless and recovering alcoholics to work at the recycling centres, providing a double payoff by salvaging individuals who were living in the shadows of the community. Lerner and his staff developed a positive, systematic, comprehensive strategy to deal with garbage in Curitiba. And, they involved the entire community in the solution.

**STREET CHILDREN!** Sound like a familiar, unsolvable problem? Lerner married the social problem of street children to an economic opportunity for merchants, small industries and shops. Local businesses adopt 10-15 children, provide them with a meal and basic wages, and the children render a variety of low-skill services in exchange.

**HAWKERS!** In Curitiba, vendors from the informal sector, who previously cluttered downtown streets and sidewalks, now move from neighbourhood to neighbourhood selling their wares at regularly scheduled open air markets. Their services are appreciated by those who can't afford the higher prices in regular stores, and the streets are clear of the usual human and material chaos that accompany the hawker trade.

**LAND-USE MALAISE!** Do you have a part of town that is in decline or buildings that are empty and a blight on a neighbourhood? Mayor Lerner and his staff worked hard to concentrate land use by making the best use of those areas that are already developed. The city encourages higher density around major transport corridors and tries to ensure that jobs are close to people and services. Declining shopping centres are recycled into other uses that are compatible with changing needs.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



**Essay**

These are just a few of the examples of how the City of Curitiba has turned problems into opportunities by linking needs and possibilities. Several values and skills and or - characterize the Mayor’s actions. He values creativity and risk-taking when it serves the municipal authority. He is also very skilful in motivating his staff and the citizens to join in new ventures. Moreover, he sees development and change as a partnership among many stakeholders, or people and institutions who have a stake in the outcomes of development and change.

Mayor Lerner is a communicator of opportunities, a person who enables others to share the burdens and rewards of community development and change, and a person who can mobilize power and resources that aren’t under his direct command. More important is his optimism that no problem is unsurmountable, that his glass is never half empty even when it’s only half full.

The successes of the Mayor and the City of Curitiba are admittedly exceptional but, nevertheless, attainable by many others. Leadership has been the critical factor in the achievements of this Brazilian city, and leadership is within the reach of all municipal councils. While some argue that leaders are born not made, we believe this is a myth. Effective leadership is a rich mix of many skills, values, behaviours, and environmental conditions. Most of these inputs can be improved through individual and group learning, and learning can be enhanced through training to opportunities of the kind included in these materials. <sup>(3)</sup>

**Reflection**

Before we move on to explore some of the other reasons why we believe training is important for elected councillors, we would like you to stop for a minute and reflect on the experiences of Curitiba and how they might help you and your colleagues on council identify new ways to solve similar problems in your local government. Think of one or more of the difficult situations that have confounded the council over the past few years and jot down some ideas you think might be success in overcoming them. Don’t hesitate to think of solutions that are inexpensive and unusual. Such solutions worked for Mayor Lerner and his staff, and they could work for you and your community.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



**Essay**

(This is the first of many times we will ask you to reflect on what you have been reading. The following box has been provided as a place where you can put your reflections.)

---

---

---

---

---

*There is something to be learned from every person who crosses your path*  
  
*- Chinese proverb*

**Why train councillors?**

Whenever local-government training requirements are assessed, regardless of the geographic location, your needs as elected officials are consistently identified as a high priority. We believe there are several reasons for this.

1. Local governments worldwide have taken on new significance in recent years. The drive for democracy is responsible for much of this since local self-governance is the foundation of democracy. If it doesn't work at this level of governance, it probably won't work at higher levels of interaction between citizens and those who represent them. In addition, there is growing recognition that local governments hold the key to the delivery of most basic human services. National governments aren't very adept at carrying out programmes that should be locally based and managed.
2. Your role as local councillor is an important factor in whether or not democracy works to the satisfaction of the citizens. More often than not, you are the individuals who decide those issues that make life easier for all of us. It is local governments that usually provide services like trash collection, clean water, human waste disposal, local streets and footpaths, parks, basic education, markets, and many more of the things we take for granted. For granted, that is, until they don't work or aren't available.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



# Essay

3. We also suspect your training needs continue to top the list of priorities because, for one reason or another, so many of you are new in the role. With each new election comes a new crop of potential candidates for training.
4. Many of you were elected because you are successful in some other endeavour in the community. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean you will be successful automatically in your new role as councillor. Success in whatever you do to earn a living should not be construed as the only preparation you need to be a successful elected leader.
5. Finally, we believe councillor training continues to be a high priority in many countries because current offerings are often either inadequate or ineffective. More often than not, available training is rule-oriented, meaning you are told what you cannot do, rather than helped to learn what you can do to be more effective as a local leader. While the rules and regulations that govern your actions and conduct are important and should be learned, they don't equip you to provide the kind of leadership that is needed in this turbulent, fast moving world. What you need to learn as a local leader, are "how to" skills, not just "don't do" information.

## Assumptions about the role of councillor

Here are some of the assumptions we've made about your role as councillor since they have formed the basis for many of our training ideas and designs.

1. First and foremost, we think your role as councillor is very complex. You are expected to be an effective member of the council team and yet an independent thinker and actor, a community spokesperson and problem solver, a decision-maker, a negotiator, a financier; and a facilitator, whatever that is. As we noted earlier, it's a complex role.
2. The role is demanding. As you already know, it can be a twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week job, particularly if you take it seriously.
3. We've assumed the role is often very frustrating. There are never enough resources to go around, and solving one local problem often creates several more. When you help one group of citizens, you may deny others the opportunity to be served. And, what you see as a logical solution to a problem is often branded as a mere political expediency by your opponents. Nobody said it would be easy.
4. On the other hand, we are assuming that the role can be enormously satisfying and personally rewarding. There are opportunities to not only make life easier for today's citizens but to leave a legacy of public service for future generations.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



# Essay

5. The role is time-consuming. But, it is often more time-consuming than it needs to be. Hopefully, the training we are suggesting will give you more control over your council time.
6. And, it is a role full of conflict, particularly if performed well. It demands independent thinking and acting and yet requires you to work in a group decision-making arena. It often demands political party loyalty while adhering to standards of community-wide accountability. Sometimes it requires you to take actions that go against what others see as “conventional wisdom” because you are better informed about the long-range consequences of such decisions. In spite of your privileged understanding of the situation, the courage to “stand up and be counted” on such issues is never easy.

## Assumptions about training councillors

We have also made some assumptions about the training process itself as it relates to your role as councillor. For example:

1. Your training needs, as an individual councillor, may be different from those of your colleagues, based on your experience and background;
2. As a councillor, you don’t have a lot of time to devote to training, and this constraint must be considered in the design of the training;
3. Given differences in training needs and time constraints, the training materials should, ideally, provide the trainer with options in designing specific learning events;
4. Most of the training materials now available are designed to impart information about the legal requirements of your role, not to develop skills needed to carry out your role more effectively; and,
5. Training materials should take advantage of your experience as an elected leader and build the learning around your experience.

*Every wall is a door.*  
- Emerson

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



## Assumptions about leadership

Finally, we have made some assumptions about the importance of leadership at the local level of governance.

# Essay

1. Never before has the need for leadership at the local level been so important obvious. We live in a global world, one where actions that are taken in one part of the world often affect those who live thousands of kilometres away.
2. Many of the problems you are called upon to solve as an elected councillor are so complex that they require leadership strategies, not administrative fixes.
3. The magnitude and frequency of “foreign policy” issues and concerns (working with others beyond the borders of the local government you serve) have increased significantly in recent years. You can no longer ignore these external affairs in your efforts to build your own community.
4. The seemingly endless saga of shrinking resources and growing demands for services at the local level has rendered the caretaker approach to government not only inoperative, but dangerous to the long-term health and viability of your communities.

Given these assumptions, training opportunities should go beyond the minimalist approach (telling you what you can’t do by outlining the laws and orders that prescribe the legal boundaries of your actions). While this type of training is important and needs to be provided, it does little to impart a sense of urgency and importance to your role, nor does it begin to develop the skills to operate effectively in a difficult and challenging environment. Beyond all else, you must feel “empowered” to act boldly and responsibly in your leadership role.

Governments around the world have a tendency to engage in cumbersome and, at times, counter-productive bureaucratic behaviour. We suspect your local government is no different. This behaviour is often characterized by the capacity to tell citizens ninety-nine reasons why they can’t do what they want to do. While many of these reasons may be legitimate not, and they give local governments “feet of clay.” Because our bureaucracies have become so formidable (and we include the national ones that often “control” local-government behaviour), it is imperative that you, as the local elected official, are equipped to work more effectively in this difficult environment. It will require more than a basic knowledge of the laws that govern your elected behaviour. We believe it calls for a full measure of leadership from each of you. Yes, leadership. You may be saying, “But, I’m not prepared for this kind of leadership role.” In this case, it may be reassuring to remember that leadership has been defined as the process that ordinary people use to bring forth the best in themselves and others.

The leadership process is, of course, backed by some pretty sound practices. In a survey of over 2000 effective leaders, two management specialists identified five fundamental practices that enable ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. These practices are worth reviewing as we begin to think about the leadership role of the local elected official. They are:

## Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders

## Training for Elected Leadership



# Essay

1. **Challenging the process to get things done.** This is done best by constantly questioning the size of, and need for, the “feet of clay” your government has grown over the years.
2. **Inspiring a shared vision.** Leadership is the ability to describe what will be as though it has been. Visions are often future-oriented and, therefore, involve what some would call an element of inspiration if they are going to be conveyed to others. There is an old saying that “you can’t light a fire with a wet match.” So it is with shared visions.
3. **Enabling others to act.** This may be the greatest weapon you have in your local government arsenal when it comes to getting things done. We’ll have a lot more to say about this strategy, or role, in the training materials.
4. **Modeling the way.** Electing you to local office represents an act of faith on the part of those who vote. It also puts you on a pedestal, or in the spotlight, and therefore raises expectations about who you are and how you should behave. While this may sound “weighty,” it can also be seen as an opportunity for you to motivate others to engage in community service through your own example.
5. **Encouraging the heart.** Building strong, viable communities through local self-governance can be enhanced through such efforts as celebrating community accomplishments and recognizing individual contributions. These are the kinds of things that are meant by “encouraging the heart.”<sup>(4)</sup>

Those of us who are engaged in helping you become more effective as a local councillor are concerned with how we can help you develop leadership qualities. It is not enough simply to help you obey the laws that govern your decisions and actions as a councillor, although we certainly don’t want to leave the impression that these are unimportant. It will serve you and your community little to know these legal boundaries if you are immobilized by an overwhelming agenda of events. Much of what confronts you as an elected leader these days requires new thinking, untried solutions, and a sizable dose of political will. Training for you and your colleagues must reflect this reality and be bold in its response.

## Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders

## Training for Elected Leadership



### The conceptual hat rack

As a councillor, you are called upon to do many things in the course of your duties. You are asked to be many things to your constituents, to perform many roles or, to use a common metaphor, to wear many hats. These different roles and expectations make your tasks as a local elected leader both difficult and challenging. We have used the metaphor of the hats to symbolize the diversity of the roles that come with the position of councillor. We also believe that metaphors help us to think differently, to help us create a slightly different mind set when we consider something as complex as the interaction between an individual and the community.

# Essay

When is the last time you read the standing orders, or legislation, that defines your role as a councillor? From the ones we have read, we are convinced that they say very little about what you really do. If our metaphor of the roles you must perform as an elected leader is, in any way, accurate, it also means you must be skilful in performing each of them if you want to be truly effective as a councillor.

We have described 11 of these roles briefly in the following pages. Subsequent handbooks cover each of these roles in considerable depth. With each role we have supplied a unique illustration - a “hat” worn by people who live and work in a region of the world which is likely to be served by this series of handbooks. We have included the hats to symbolize and celebrate the many-faceted roles performed by elected leaders of local governments worldwide. You will find one of these 11 remarkable hat illustrations introduced by role in the Appendix to this handbook and by country of origin in the opening pages of each subsequent handbook.

(Incidentally, we would encourage you to expand our interpretation of your hat rack. During the first field-test of these materials with a group of councillors from Uganda, they recommended expanding the materials to include a handbook on council-staff relationships. In response to their suggestion we’ve added a role we are calling “The Institution Builder.” It looks at the council-staff relationship issue as well as other aspects of developing a strong, viable local-government organization).

I. *The councillor, in the role of **Policy-maker**, is involved in establishing goals, examining alternatives, and determining strategies that will guide present and future actions to benefit the community.*

**The Policy-maker** is perhaps the most obvious and the least understood of all the roles the councillor performs. It is the role that: provides the big picture for the community, sets long-range goals, develops strategic plans of implementation, and helps define the community, its priorities and its values. It is also the role where others can impose their own values and ideas, often to subvert or redirect what council has ordained. For example, a council policy can undergo a dramatic transformation in the hands of an unsympathetic staff. Policy can also be made by default. When councils take a passive role in policy making, other forces move in to fill the void.

II. *The councillor, in the role of **Decision-maker**, makes up his or her mind when there is an option or choice.*

**The Decision-maker** is the role most associated with the management process and yet the one that defines, in more specific terms than any other, who you are and what you stand for. One writer has defined a **real** decision as “a free, unconditional, total, and personal commitment to a choice or option, or a group of them.”<sup>(5)</sup> The definition just stated doesn’t take into

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# Essay

consideration those decisions made by groups, of which the most obvious, from the perspective of this discussion, are those made by councils. We will also explore the most elusive of decisions - the decision not to decide.

III. *The councillor, in the role of **Communicator**, gives and receives information, ideas, and feelings with accuracy and understanding.*

**The Communicator** is the role-hat that most citizens see you wearing. As a result, it is often equated with your political stance in the community. The role of communicator is complicated by the many options that are available to the communicator. And, many of these options involve specialized skills and behaviour on the part of the councillor who is communicating. For example, are we talking about written or oral communication? Communication to a group of people, or to an individual? Communication in a formal setting, such as a council hearing, or in a local tavern after the council meeting has adjourned? Communication skills are also linked to what you are trying to achieve through communicating with others. It will not be possible to cover all the communicating situations you find yourself in as a councillor. Given this limitation, we will concentrate on those we believe are most important and least likely to be addressed by training programmes. For example, we will look at the art of “active listening,” one of those skills, some cynics believe, that is totally absent from the political scene.

IV. *The councillor, in the role of **Facilitator**, fosters collective effort, helps others solve problems, ensures that committee meetings are productive, and manages inter-personal and intergroup conflict.*

**The Facilitator** role has a contemporary sounding name but says a lot about on what effective leaders have been doing for centuries. Webster’s Dictionary defines the facilitator as someone who “makes things easier.” We view facilitator skills as being multi-purpose. As it suggests in the definition, the facilitator is skilful in working with small groups, such as committees and community organizations. She is also someone you would turn to when there is conflict in a group, or between two or three people. These individuals are also good at helping others solve problems because they understand, first of all, how to define problems and to differentiate them from symptoms and solutions. The councillor who is an effective facilitator is a good person to have around.

V. *The councillor, in the role of **Enabler**, makes things possible, practical, and easier for others who are not quite prepared to do things for themselves.*

**The Enabler** may be the most esoteric of the 11 roles because it begins to define the role of the local government in terms of what others can do, not in terms of what local governments should do. It builds on some recent thinking

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# Essay

about the use of the private and non-governmental sectors as programme and service deliverers. And, we might add, the ability of individuals to meet many of their own needs when they receive the right kind of assistance from others, including their local government. The 1.5 Million Houses Programme in Sri Lanka is a good example of enabling. The role of the public sector, in that innovative programme, is confined to the provision of technical and financial support to individual low-income households and communities. The scarcity of public resources makes the enabling role imperative for councils determined to play an assertive role in the community's development.

VI. *The councillor, in the role of **Negotiator**, helps others reach an agreeable solution which they have differing interests and needs.*

**The Negotiator** is the role that may require the greatest skills on your part. Often those on the other side of the negotiation process are highly skilled in "striking the best deal" for themselves or their clients. Negotiating skills can be used in just about everything you do that involves someone else who has a different view of what should be done. The ideal agreement is one that meets the criteria of the win-win solution. These are agreements where all involved parties see themselves as better off than they would have been without negotiating, although maybe not as well off as they wanted.

VII. *The councillor, in the role of **Financier**, makes decisions about raising, allocating, and expending public funds.*

**The Financier** is the most traditional and, no doubt, the most important role you perform. At the heart of the financier role is the responsibility of adopting the annual budget. But there's much more, and the real test of the financier is what he/she does in preparation for budget adoption and how what is happening throughout the year to the finances of the local authority is carefully scrutinized. Are revenue collections living up to expectations? Are expenditures under control? Have there been unusual events in the community or beyond that will markedly change the projections council made at budget time? What about trends that could put your local government in jeopardy?

VIII. *The councillor, in the role of **Overseer**, ensures that the council and the staff are doing the right things and doing things right through such activities as monitoring and evaluating policies, programmes, and services.*

**The Overseer** may be the least worn of the councillor's hats because it is more satisfying to allocate community resources than to oversee how well they are being spent. But the overseer role, as we see it, is much more than

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# Essay

ensuring that community resources are being well spent. Councillors as overseers should, for example, be looking over their shoulders to ensure that their policies continue to serve the community. Too often the overseer role deals only with issues of wrongdoing and misconduct on the part of staff. A more pro-active overseer role by council looks at the outcomes of public service to ensure they are congruent with their policies and intent or that the quality of the service is meeting established standards. This suggests that the council has clearly defined standards of performance. To oversee performance effectively requires benchmarks for measuring performance. As you can see, the overseer role gets a bit complex when it is taken seriously. We will look at ways to strengthen the overseer function so councils can maximize resources and improve the quality of government services.

IX. *The councillor, in the role as **Power Broker**, uses his or her own personal sources of power, as well as official position power, to get things done.*

The discussion of power, particularly power associated with political office, makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Their reactions are understandable. The powers that come with public office are often misused and abused. There is a tremendous amount of corruption in local governments around the world. But this is no reason to ignore it in a programme of this kind or not to explore the source of corruption, which is in large measure the power and influence vested in the office.

We will look at several sources of power, many of them personal and not associated with the elected office you hold. It is our belief that these sources of power are resources to help you get things accomplished for your constituents; that these sources of power are, in themselves, value neutral. It is in the use, or we should say misuse, of power and authority that councillors and others sometimes go astray. If you are to be effective as an elected official, you cannot ignore the power sources you bring on Training to the office or the power and influence the office brings to you.

X. *The councillor, in the role of **Institution Builder**, supports the development of staff personnel and the local-government organization as important responsibilities of local elected leadership.*

As mentioned earlier, the elected officials who took part in a field-test and modification of these materials said their concerns surrounding council-staff relations should be included. We agreed and added this topic to the series of handbooks. As we discussed how to approach this topic, we realized the underlying concern is the development of an effective and efficient staff and organization to carry out council's policies and programmes. There is an old saying that attempts to put the policy administration dichotomy between council and staff into perspective: "The council proposes; the staff disposes." Of course, without a competent, dedicated staff and organization, what the council proposes sometimes doesn't get much beyond the rhetoric stages of implementation. Because your policy stands are only as good as the resources

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# Essay

you provide to carry them out, it is wise to take the institution-building role seriously. We will look at ways to strengthen the council-staff relationship. We will also delve into some of the strategies you and the staff can use to build and sustain t capacity of the local-government organization and its human resources.

XI. *The councillor, in the role of **Leader**, exercises all of the roles at his or her command to help bring about positive and significant changes in the lives of constituents and the community.*

The role of the elected **Leader** is the exercise of all the roles we have been discussing, either individually or in various combinations, and of course much more. It may also be the most mysterious of the roles because we still don't know as much as we would like to about this thing we call leadership. Election to public office carries with it the assumptions that you are a leader and will perform as a leader on behalf your constituents. For some of you, these assumptions may be a heavy burden to bear. For others, the role of "leader" may be easy and welcome.

We will look at how some of these roles can be combined to increase your leadership potential. We will also share with you what others have been saying lately about the role of the elected leader.

## Eleven roles and much more

"Well", you may very well be saying, "it's a beginning." And, we couldn't agree with you more. There is so much that you, in your elected leadership role, must be the consummate councillor. This manual has been written to fill a few of the gaps in the materials that are now available to help you do your job better.

There are many issues, or councillor learning needs, not covered by these materials, that we believe need to be addressed in any comprehensive elected leadership training programme. We are referring to the many laws, rules, regulation ordinances, and standing orders that describe the powers and duties of local council and how they are to operate. Knowledge of these legal requirements of your role as is the first order of business when it comes to training.

There are other procedures to be mastered if you want to be effective in your role. These include: the budget and other financial processes or strategies used by local authority; planning and land-use procedures; and regulatory mechanisms that will require your attention on a fairly routine basis.

You could easily become overwhelmed by the amount of learning required to function effectively in this role. Fortunately, there are ways to conserve one's time and energies when it comes to improving your knowledge and skills as a councillor.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# Essay

- First, put priorities on those things that are important to learn.
- Second, make an effort to use the skills that are taught in these modules to help save time that can be spent more effectively mastering other necessary knowledge and skill areas. For example, learning how to facilitate more effective meetings could save you and your council colleagues a lot of time.
- Finally, resist the temptation to get immersed in the administrative details of local government operations, unless the size of your local government is so small that you have no other choice.

## The size of your constituency

Before we close this introductory discussion of the various roles you perform as an elected leader in your local authority, we want to mention two concerns that came up during the initial field-test of these materials. Some councillors asked whether the size and complexity of the local authorities they represent make any difference in the roles they perform or the way training for local elected leaders should be conducted. First, we believe the roles are the same, regardless of the size of your municipality. The way you carry them out may be influenced by the size of your constituency, but every councillor will be more effective by understanding what each of the roles described above means and by having the skills to perform them. Sometimes the challenges in the smaller local authorities are as complex as those in the larger cities.

The manner in which you and other councillors are trained in your respective countries is not for us to dictate. These are decisions best left to those who will be arranging for the training. They may want to hold separate training workshops for those from the larger cities and those representing the smaller communities. Or, the elected leaders in an area with both large and small local authorities may believe they can benefit from attending workshops together regardless of the size of the constituencies they each represent. They see the training as a way of addressing regional problems that require understanding and action by all local authorities regardless of size. The position of elected representative carries with it certain responsibilities, regardless of the size of your constituency. The way you apply the knowledge and skills of the roles we have described briefly in this introduction will be dictated, in large measure, by the resources you have at your command and the magnitude of the challenge.

## The use of labels

We are consistent in the use of the term councillor to describe who you are as an elected official representing a local government, even though your official title might be different. We are less consistent in referring to the legal, or political, jurisdiction you represent. For example, we have just used the term city to describe the larger jurisdictions in the discussion of size and its relevance to the training challenge.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



# Essay

It was recommended we use the term constituency to describe what you represent. The use of this word gets confusing if your “constituency” is a ward or so other geographically defined area within the larger local government and you believe this is your primary constituency. Election to public office, as a councillor, also carries with it the responsibility to represent the entire local government. So, the term constituency can be confusing, although we use it when we are considering such issues representation.

At times we use the term **local authority** and at other times the word **municipality**. In each case we are referring to the legal entity you represent as an elected official. We hope these different terms aren’t confusing or distracting, or not inclusive enough, if you happen to represent a local authority by some other name.

Finally, we use the word **community** to refer to the concept of shared values as and beliefs that are so important in forging new direction and achieving goals within your elected sphere of responsibility.

## Summary

We have attempted to convey to you why we believe the training of councillors is so important as well as some of the assumptions we have made in developing these materials for your use. Finally, we have given you a preview of what we believe to be the important roles you perform as a councillor and what you might expect in a further discussion of each of these roles. As stated earlier, these roles are only part of the picture of the complete, competent elected leader. Leadership is much more than the ability to do certain tasks effectively or to perform various roles in an efficient manner. In the final analysis, only you can decide what kind of elected representative you want to be on behalf of your constituents.

## References

1. Gardner, John, On Leadership (New York, The Free Press, 1990), p. 113.
2. “City Fixer, Brazil’s Lerner Tackles the Urban Mess,” World Monitor, March 1992.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



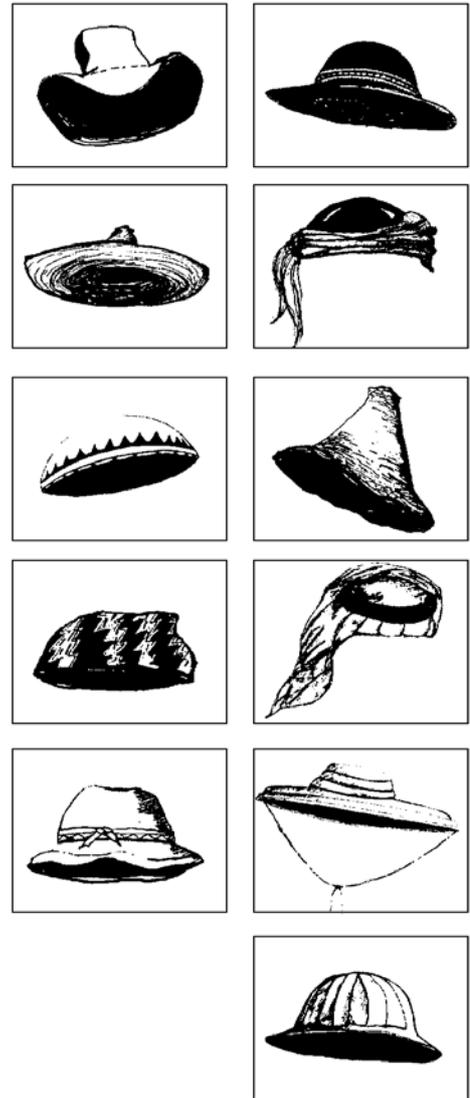
## Essay

4. Kouzes, James M., and Posner Barry Z., *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 1990), pp. 7 - 13.
5. Rubin, Theodore Isaac, *Overcoming Indecisiveness* (New York Harper and Row, 1985), p. 11.

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**





## PART II

# INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



### Purpose

The materials included in this overview are to be used by the trainer to initiate a series of workshops on elected leadership. In other words, these materials are meant to serve as an introduction when several of the councillor roles are to be covered during the same workshop series. On the other hand, these materials might be used by a trainer to supplement the content of a programme devoted to just one councillor role. Either way, they are intended to get the training off to a successful start by helping participants get acquainted with each other, providing them with information on workshop content, and letting them experience the type of interaction to be used throughout the workshop series,

### Contents

A brief description of each learning activity is shown below with an approximation of the amount of time required. If you wish to change the order, to omit something, or to add training material of your own, feel free to do so.

#### **1.1 Warm-up exercise: getting to know you**

Introductions to acquaint participants with each other and the trainer, let them know what will be expected of them, and help them to feel more comfortable in the learning environment. (15 - 60 minutes)

#### **1.2 Exercise: perceptions of role performance**

Participants individually generate information about their councillor performance and the performance of their councils in relation to a list of councillor roles and compare results in groups. (60 - 75 minutes)

#### **1.3 Exercise: recognizing councillor roles**

An alternative to the preceding exercise. Participants work in small groups to recognize and compile lists of councillor roles and rate the roles on challenge and the need for training. (60 minutes)

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



## 1.1 Warm up Exercise: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**Time required: 15-60 minutes**

### Objective

This exercise is to help participants get to know each other and the trainer, let them know what will be expected of them, and cause them to feel more comfortable in the learning environment.

### Process

After welcoming remarks by the host agency representative and a short description of programme objectives, scheduling and logistics, give a brief personal introduction and invite participants to get acquainted. This can be done in a number of ways.

1. **Self-introductions.** You might ask participants to say a few things about themselves such as their names and countries, the local authorities they represent, the number of years they have served as councillors, and why they have chosen to take part in this workshop or workshop series.
2. **Paired introductions.** You might ask participants to pair up to get acquainted, to gather some personal/professional data on one another, and then, in turn, for each participant to introduce his or her partner to the group.
3. **Small group mixer.** You might have each participant write on a card the name of the councillor role in which they would most like to be more skilful. Since many of the participants may not be aware of the roles to be covered by the training, you may have to make a list of them on newsprint or a blackboard before starting the exercise.

After participants have completed the task, ask them to get up and wander around the training room until they locate another participant with a similar need. After a few minutes, have participants who have the same role interests join together in small groups to discuss what they would like to know or be able to do better regarding that role. Ask for volunteers from the various groups to report on their group's results.



## Workshop

Trainers  
Notes

### 1.2 *Exercise:* PERCEPTIONS OF ROLE PERFORMANCE

**Time required: 60-75 minutes**

#### **Objective**

This exercise is to help participants relate their own council experience to the various council roles included in the workshop series.

(**Note:** If participants have not read the essay that begins this handbook and are not familiar with the roles in which they are to be trained, you might substitute *Exercise 1.3* for this one).

#### **Process**

Using a questionnaire like the one shown on the next two pages, ask participants to provide some information about their own performance and the performance of their respective councils in relation to various council roles.

When participants have completed the task individually, ask them to share their responses in small groups. Suggest that a recorder in each small group make a list of the responses and tabulate them to identify the patterns (i.e., which roles are most often mentioned in response to items in the two boxes).

After about 30 minutes of small group discussion, reconvene the on Training participants. Ask for a summary report from each small group. Encourage a discussion of similarities and differences in small group results.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



## PERCEPTIONS OF COUNCILLOR/ COUNCIL PERFORMANCE: A QUESTIONNAIRE

### Instructions

Read the following descriptions of roles performed by elected officials in local governments and authorities. After you have read each of the role statements fill in the information as requested in the two boxes below the list of statements.

### Councillor Role Statements

- I. The councillor, in the role of **Policy-maker**, is involved in establishing goals, examining alternatives, and determining strategies that will guide present and future actions to benefit the community.
- II. The councillor, in the role of **Decision-maker**, makes up his or her mind when there is an option or choice.
- III. The councillor, in the role of **Communicator**, gives and receives information, ideas, and feelings with accuracy and understanding.
- IV. The councillor, in the role of **Facilitator**, fosters collective effort, helps others solve problems, ensures that committee meetings are productive, and manages interpersonal and intergroup conflict.
- V. The councillor, in the role of **Enabler**, makes things possible, practical, and easier for others who are not quite prepared to do things for themselves.
- VI. The councillor, in the role of **Negotiator**, helps others reach an agreeable solution when they have differing interests and needs.
- VII. The councillor, in the role of **Financier**, makes decisions about raising, allocating, and expending public funds.
- VIII. The councillor, in the role of **Overseer**, ensures that the council and staff are doing the right things and doing those things right through such activities as monitoring and evaluating policies, programmes, and services.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



**Workshop**

**Exercise**

- IX. The councillor, in the role as Power Broker, uses his or her own personal sources of power, as well as the power of the official position as councillor, to get things done.
  - X. The councillor, in the role of Institution Builder, supports the development of staff personnel and the local government organization as important responsibilities of local elected leadership.
  - XI. The councillor, in the role of Leader, exercises all of the roles at his or her command to help bring about positive and significant changes in the lives of constituents and the community.
1. With respect to my own councillor performance, I would rate the 11 councillor roles described above as follows:

**My Performance**

**Role**

The role in which I do best is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role in which I do the least well is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role that is the most challenging for me is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role that is the least challenging for me is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The three roles for which I want training the most are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



**Workshop**

**Exercise**

2. With respect to my council's performance, I would rate the 11 councillor described above as follows:

**My Performance**

**Role**

The role in which my council does the best is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role in which my council does the least well is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role that is the most challenging for my council is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The role that is the least challenging for my council is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The three roles for which my council needs training the most are:

\_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders**

**Training for  
Elected  
Leadership**



## Workshop

Trainers  
Notes

### 1.3 Exercise: RECOGNIZING COUNCILLOR

**Time required: 60 minutes**

#### Objective

This exercise is to stimulate participating councillors to recognize and think about the roles in which they perform as councillors.

(**Note:** You can use this exercise in place of the previous one when workshop participants have not read the preceding essay and are not familiar with the roles contained in the workshop materials.)

#### Process

Divide participants into small groups of five to seven participants each. Give each group the following task to complete, drawing on the experience of its members.

#### **Task:**

Make a list of roles which councillors are expected to perform. Which two or three of these roles are the most challenging? For which two or three of the roles is training needed the most?

Give participants about 30 minutes to complete the task. Bring participants back and ask for reports from each small group. Make a list of the roles reported each group, eliminating duplication. Circle, in turn, the roles which small group members collectively rate as: (a) the most challenging; and (b) the greatest need training. Encourage a discussion of the implications of the outcome of this exercise for current and future training emphasis for local elected leadership.

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership



# APPENDIX

## The Conceptual Hat Rack

Policy Maker			Leader
Decision Maker			Institution Builder
Communicator			Power Broker
Facilitator			Overseer
Enabler			Financier
			Negotiator

Perspectives  
on Training  
Elected  
Leaders

Training for  
Elected  
Leadership

