LAP
Leadership
Academy
Programme

Stage 1 – LEADERSHIP FOR ORGANISATIONS

Module 5 – SELF-AWARENESS AND GROUP EMPOWERMENT

The Leadership Academy is a learning and action programme for mayors, senior officials and elected representatives of local government.

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1   MODULE OVERVIEW

1.1   BACKGROUND

- A core attribute of leadership is self-awareness, i.e. the capacity of being aware of own strengths and weaknesses as well as of own Emotional Intelligence traits (ref. Module 6). It is key so to use them for the benefit of the common goal pursued by the organisation (thus being able to master own traits to deal with different situations).

- One of the traits that one needs to understand about oneself to achieve self-awareness and maximisation of own potential is the balance between inclination towards working with people or being specifically oriented towards tasks fulfilment. The former is a tendency towards relation, the other towards the completion of a given set of actions.

- Whereas we all have personal preferences, leadership requires a balance among the two aspects. What happens if a task-oriented team is put into a situation that requires strong people-orientation, such as a negotiation? The team members would have to be able to temporarily shift their attitude towards a more people-oriented approach to be effective. Likewise, a people-oriented team might be in the need to complete a project within a short time span. The team members would need to have the skills to shift their natural attitude towards a more task-oriented approach until the goal is achieved. The self-awareness about own natural orientation (ref. Module 6)

together with the ability to shift to more appropriate tools when necessary is a crucial leadership skill.

- This LAP module aims at delivering tools for the recognition by all members of an organisation of their own personal inclination, be it more oriented towards people (building relations, creating and supporting a team, etc.) or towards the accomplishment of a specific task.

1.2   LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn the meaning of self-awareness and that the journey towards it never ends.

- To learn the meaning and implications of "natural" task or people orientation preferences.

1.3   LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants understand the importance and traits of self-awareness.

- Participants identify the obstacles and limiting beliefs that get in the way of self-awareness and of the following mastery of the self in different situations.

- Participants identify own leadership preferences and orientation towards people and tasks.

- Participants learn how to shift their 'natural' orientation towards functional attitudes in different circumstances.

1.4   DURATION

- 140 minutes

2 MODULE STRUCTURE

2.1 INTERACTIVE INTRODUCTION
- Participants are introduced to the concept of self-awareness;
- Participants are asked to work in small groups (3-4 people) to identify traits of self-awareness and following capacity to master self in different situations.

2.2 INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE 1 – SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLE-TASK ORIENTATION
- Participants work individually in identifying own people-task orientation.

2.3 GROUP EXERCISE 1 – OBSTACLES TO SELF-MASTERY
- Participants work in groups (3-4 people) to identify potential obstacles to self-awareness.

2.4 GROUP EXERCISE 2 – LIMITING BELIEFS
- Participants work in groups (3-4 people) to identify behaviours connected to limiting beliefs within a team.

2.5 INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE 2 – ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEAM WORKING
- Participants work individually in identifying own attitude towards team working.

3 WORKING DEFINITIONS

3.1 SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is broadly defined as "knowledge and awareness of own personality or character"[1], thus to recognise own strengths, weaknesses, characteristic traits and likely actions/reactions in given circumstances. Self-awareness in then an ability to identify oneself as separate from other individuals, with own feelings, thoughts, perceptions, ideas. For the purpose of LAP, self-awareness for leadership is the foundation on which mastery of the self and understanding of own potential and limits in given contexts are rooted.

3.2 PEOPLE-TASK ORIENTATION[2]

As self-awareness implies, different people might understand to have rather different work-related preferences within an organisation. Relationship-oriented people are focused on supporting, motivating and developing their relationships. More specifically for the purpose of LAP, a relationship-oriented leader is concerned with supporting and motivating his/her own team as well as to promote the relations within. Task-oriented people instead focus on getting the tasks needed done, so to fulfill an objective. Task-oriented leaders would then be less concerned with team building and rather focused on identification of specific steps to reach a goal.

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[1]   Merriam-Webster   Dictionary   definition, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self–awareness

[2] Forsyth, D. R. (2010). Group Dynamics (5th edition), Belmont, CA

4 KEY CONCEPTS

Good leadership requires people to achieve a certain level of self-awareness.

The following list sets out how some possible behaviours related to a process of self-awareness, when a person tries to understand own strengths and weaknesses and to change attitudes he/she finds limiting:

- Recognises own weaknesses and accepts them, taking them into account when acting (i.e. not acting beyond own available resources);
- Understands inner reactions to outer events and identifies their appropriateness to the current situation;
- Knows what matters to him / her and is assertive about it;
- Respects what matters to others;
- Feels good about self, admits failings and can learn from mistakes;
- Learns to handle failure.

There might be several obstacles on the road to self-awareness. Some of them will be beliefs that we have about ourselves that limit our leadership potential.

Limiting beliefs create fear, and this limits own potential of action and change, both for oneself and within a team.

- To overcome fear and support each other, good leadership within a team depends on trust. Trust is not something 'natural' (especially in a newly formed team) but can be achieved through an open attitude towards oneself and other. As an examples, come of these attitudes might be:
- Recognising and expressing your sense of inter-dependence *(mental attitude)*.
- Showing appreciation of others, their ideas and efforts *(emotional attitude)*.
- Caring about the well-being of the team *(emotional attitude)*.
- Showing a strong sense of public service in purpose, as a way to cement a common-goal approach within the team *(values-oriented attitude)*.
- Finding the right balance between need to achieve results and to create a sense of belonging-cooperation within the team (values-*oriented approach*).

By understanding the obstacles confronting us, by recognising and working on personal limiting beliefs and by developing an attitude of trust, people can effectively develop their own self-awareness and use it as a tool contributing to effective team working (ref. Module 6).

5 EXERCISES

5.1 EXERCISE 1 – INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE 1- SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLE-TASK ORIENTATION

Below is a list of statements. Use the scale below to decide the extent to which each statement applies to you.
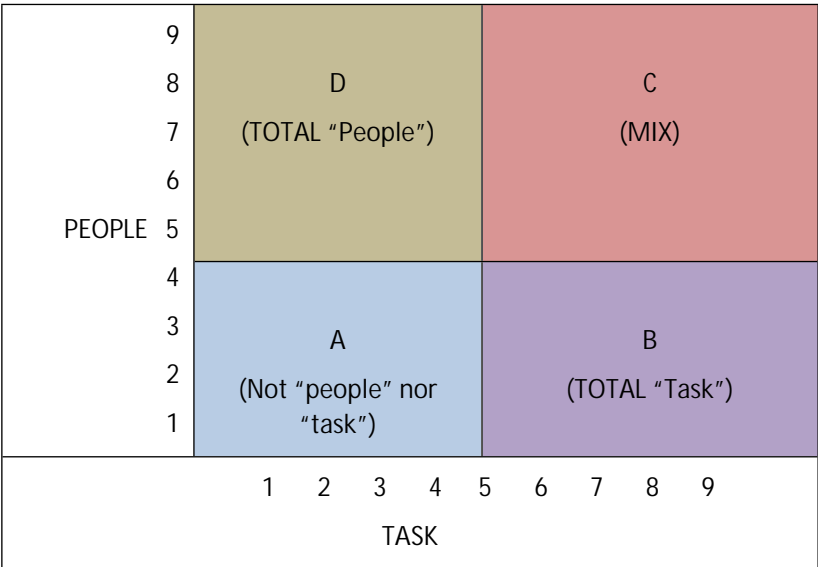
Never applies					Always applies
0	1	2	3	4	5

Number	Score	Statement
1		I encourage my team to participate when it comes decision-making time and I try to implement their ideas and suggestions
2		Nothing is more important than accomplishing a goal or task.
3		I closely monitor the schedule to ensure a task or project will be completed in time.
4		I enjoy coaching people on new tasks and procedures.
5		The more challenging a task is, the more I enjoy it.
6		I encourage my employees to be creative about their job.
7		When seeing a complex task through to completion, I ensure that every detail is accounted for.
8		I find it easy to carry out several complicated tasks at once.
9		I enjoy reading articles, books, and journals about training and leadership; and then putting what I have read into action.
10		When correcting mistakes, I do not worry about jeopardizing relationships.
11		I manage my time very efficiently.
12		I enjoy explaining the intricacies and details of a complex task or project to my employees.
13		I am happy breaking large projects into small manageable tasks.
14		Nothing is more important than building a great team.
15		I enjoy analysing problems.
16		I respect other people's boundaries.
17		I am happy counselling my employees to improve their performance or behaviour.
18		I enjoy reading articles, books, and trade journals about my profession; and implementing new procedures I learned.

Now you can transfer your answers to the spaces below; multiply the total score by 0.2 to get your final score.

People (Vertical Dimension)	Task (Horizontal Dimension)
1._____	2._____
4._____	3._____
6._____	5._____
9._____	7._____
10._____	8._____
12._____	11._____
14._____	13._____
16._____	15._____
17._____	18._____
TOTAL _____	TOTAL _____
FINAL SCORE (X 0.2) _____	FINAL SCORE (X 0.2) _____

The Orientation Grid

Plot your final scores on the graph below by placing a dot next to the people score on the vertical axis and a dot next to the task score on the horizontal axis. Then, draw two lines from each dot until they intersect. The area of intersection is the leadership dimension where you operate.

	9		
	8	D	C
	7	(TOTAL "People")	(MIX)
	6		
PEOPLE	5		
	4		
	3	A	B
	2	(Not "people" nor	(TOTAL "Task")
	1	"task")	

```
            1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
                          TASK
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The Results

This Grid will give you an idea on whether you are a more people or task oriented person. See where you placed yourself on the grid. You can ask yourself whether this result reflects your attitude or not. If so, would you like to move further towards people or towards task at times?

You can ask also colleagues of yours to fill in this questionnaire thinking of you, to see how others perceive your position within the team.

This questionnaire can be a useful tool for self- assessment, to identify more clearly (if you deem it relevant) whether a more 'people' or 'task' oriented approach might be needed in your day-to day activity within your organisation.

You can also bring this questionnaire back to your organisation and have all members of your team asses themselves. You can then all talk about the results and see how might be more appropriate to cover which role within the team, based on their attitude.

5.2 EXERCISE 2- GROUP EXERCISE 1- OBSTACLES TO SELF-AWARENESS

There may be specific obstacles that prevent people from effectively embarking on the road to self-awareness and following mastery of self in different situations.

In groups of 3 persons, seek to understand the obstacles, why and how they might act to limit a person in his/her own development. Then, together with your group, imagine some actions that might help to overcome these obstacles. Draw from imagination, of from your personal experience, imagining that all that you are sharing is for yourself and in turn help others.

OBSTACLES	HOW TO OVERCOME THEM?

5.3   EXERCISE 3 – GROUP EXERCISE 2 - LIMITING BELIEFS

In groups of 3 persons, imagine members of the team being scared of the things listed in the "Fear column".
How do you imagine they would behave within the team, with these fears in mind? Complete the template below:

ASPECT	FEAR	RESULTING BEHAVIOUR
Significance	• Of being ignored. • Of being seen as insignificant.	
Competence	• Of being humiliated. • Of being seen as powerless or useless.	
Likeability	• Of being rejected or unloved.	

5.3.1   Personal Leadership – Key Limiting Beliefs (completed template)

ASPECT	FEAR	POSSIBLE RESULTING BEHAVIOUR
Significance	Of being ignored Of being seen as insignificant	Does not raise certain issues Gives in easily Stays away Makes self excessively visible Projects own beliefs on to others Becomes insensitive
Competence	Of being humiliated Of being seen as powerless or useless Of being inadequate or failing	Is over-controlling, building sense of superiority and being over-critical of others Seeks perfection Criticises others Avoids responsibility Unaware of need for change Restricts choice
Likeability	Of being rejected or unloved	Keeps others at arms' length Discloses too much about self Is clingy Tries to cause early rejection

5.4   EXERCISE 4 – INDIVIDUAL EXERCISE 2 - ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEAM WORKING

Working individually, consider the questions below, answering using numbers between 1 and 10, where 1=not at all and 10=yes, very much.

	SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	SCORE (1–10)
1	Do I believe that I am significant?	
2	Do I believe others matter? Does it show in my behaviour?	
3	Do I pay attention to others?	
4	Do I seek out contact with others?	
5	Do I trust others to do a good job? (and vice versa?)	
6	Do I trust my own abilities?	
7	How good am I at delegating?	
8	Do I feel close to others? (and vice versa?)	
9	Do I like people?	
10	How open am I with others? (and vice versa?)	
11	Am I natural with others?	

Your answers will remain confidential unless you yourself choose to discuss them.

6 REFERENCES

Forsyth, D. R. (2010). Group Dynamics (5th edition), Belmont, CA