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What are we
learning about…?

Community leadership in networks

Portraits of community leadership in practice

A development tool designed for use in creating
a portrait of what community leadership looks
like in practice.

Community Leadership Strategy

Networked Learning Communities

| learning from each other | learning with each other | learning on behalf of each other |

Acknowledgements

Portraits of community leadership in practice

This development tool has been used successfully with NCSL's Community Leadership Network to help participants gain a greater understanding of what leadership practice looks like in their communities. This tool can be used to develop understandings of the different perspectives of community leadership within individual organisations such as a school or children's centre and across networks of organisations, for example a multi-agency network or a learning network of schools.

The activity invites involvement from a wide variety of participants at all levels in the communities and organisations within your network. This could include teachers, community leaders, residents, pupils, parents and carers, school governors, multi-agency partners and colleagues from the business community, to name but a few. Involving a diverse group of participants in the activity will enable the generation of a wide range of perspectives and rich dialogue to promote understanding and awareness of what community leadership looks like in practice. □

The 'Portraits of practice' activity is designed to enable participants to:

- reflect on their personal perspectives of community leadership
- know more about different perspectives of leadership in communities
- explore what leadership in their own community looks like
- understand what could count as successful leadership in different communities
- know more about the powerful questions which could be asked about community leadership

The portraits of practice activity

Activity guidance

Resources

- lots of different coloured pens, pencils and markers
- paper of different shapes and colours – big sheets if possible
- flipchart paper and marker pens
- plastercine or paint in different colours

Be creative in your choice of resources. The possibilities are endless.

Organise…

These notes provide guidance only:

- Use your knowledge of the participants to guide your choice of resources and your approach.
- The suggested timings and group size for the activity are provided as a guide only and they can be adapted to suit your own purposes and context.
- When leading this session, it is important to provide sufficient time for individuals to reflect on their own understanding of community leadership before engaging in group dialogue.
- When working in a small group, each person will need at least 15 minutes airtime as a minimum, to talk about their own perspectives of community leadership.

Introducing the activity

5 mins

1 *Explain* who you are and why you have brought this group of people together.

2 *Outline* why you are engaging in this activity – to explore the question 'What does leadership look like and feel like in practice in your community?'

3 *Introduce the task*

- Explain that participants should work on their own to draw or represent what leadership looks like in their community.
- Indicate that you are not looking for beautiful drawings, and that words, symbols, diagrams, models etc. can be used instead. Participants should represent their perspectives using whatever form of media they feel most comfortable with.
- Inform participants that they can use any of the resources which have been provided.
- Explain that although participants will have the opportunity to share their perspectives of community leadership later in the session, they will only share the images they produce with a small group of people.

Individual task

20 mins

1 *Encourage* quiet reflective time to enable participants to reflect on their individual perspectives of community leadership.

2 *Provide* sufficient time to ensure that everyone has something they can share.

Individual task – quiet, reflective time to represent your perspectives…

Group task

45 mins

1 **Form groups** of three or four. Members of the group should take it in turn to describe their representation of what leadership in their community looks like. Once each person has told their story, other group members can ask questions.

2 **There are three group roles** which should be rotated:

● Role 1: the **storyteller** describes their representation of what leadership looks like in their community.

● Role 2: the **scribe** writes down all the questions asked by the group and acts as timekeeper, ensuring that each storyteller has at least 15 minutes airtime, shared equally between storytelling, questions and discussion.

● Role 3: the **seeker** identifies and records what the gaps are in the story: what's missing, what is implicit in the story or representation?

Small group plenary

15 mins

1 Once everyone in the group has had their turn, the group should consider together – which questions were most powerful? And what were the gaps?

2 Each group should then agree on three questions which unlock perspectives of community leadership and which reveal implicit assumptions.

3 These questions should be recorded on flipchart paper.

Group activity – sharing perspectives of community leadership…

Whole group plenary

15 mins

1 Participants should join together as a larger group to share their questions and to consider 'What are we looking for when we search for leadership in the community?'

2 Flipchart records should be posted around the room to share the outcomes of the discussion with others.

3 The flipchart records of questions can then be collected in and returned to participants in a summary form at a later date.

Summary reflection

10 mins

1 Using 'Reflection for action record' sheet (see page 7) individual participants should address the following questions in presenting a written reflection on the activity:

● What insights from this session will you share with colleagues?

● As a result of this session, what actions will you suggest?

● What support would help you to take this action forward?

You may wish to adapt these questions and devise your own reflective record sheet – to suit the needs and context of your participant group. □
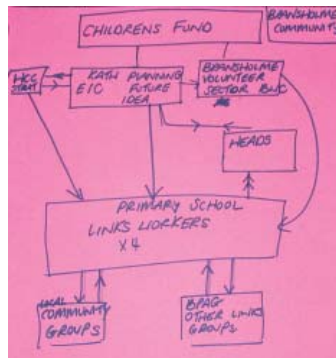
Portraits of community leadership in practice
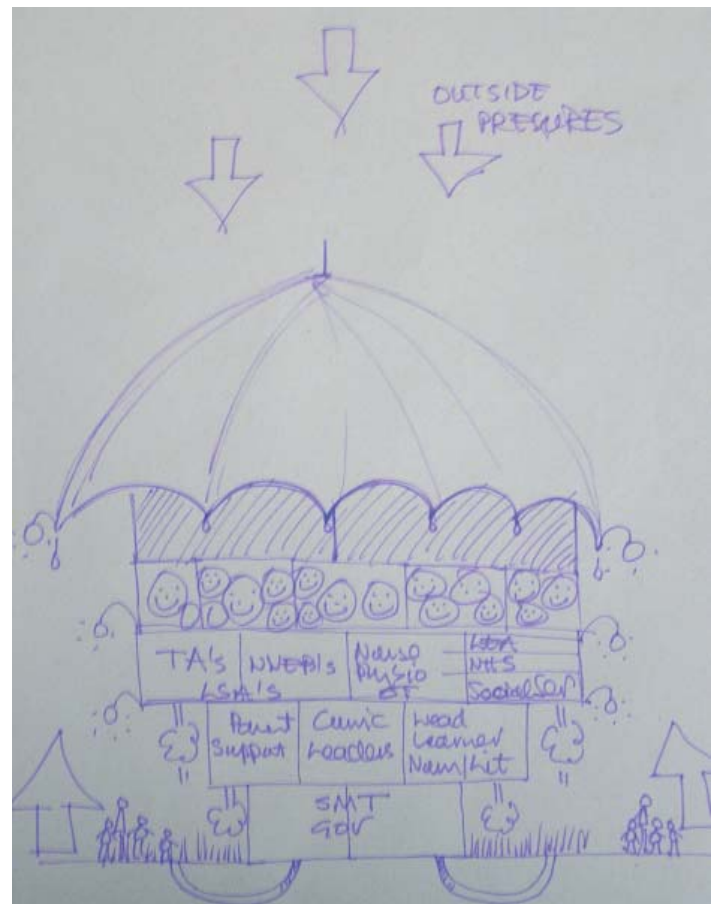
Using…

…a 3-D model

…an organisational chart

…a picture or diagram
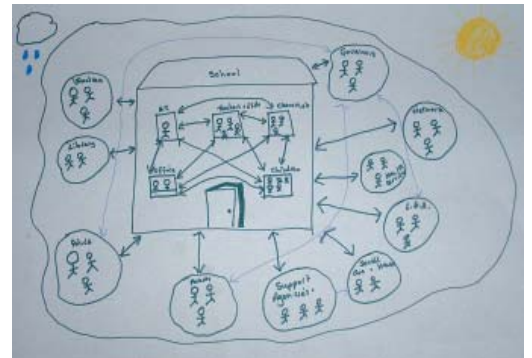
…a graphic metaphor

…or a combination of approaches

Portraits of community leadership in practice
Reflection for action record Photocopy this page

Pause for thought...?

What insights from this activity will you share with others?

Who do you need to talk to?

As a result of this activity, what actions will you suggest?

Who do you need to talk to?

What support would help you to take this action forward?

Who do you need to talk to?

What are we
learning about...?

The 'What are we learning about…?' series is designed to make public the learning that has emerged from NLCs in the last two years.

The first nine titles in the series will focus on:
What are we learning about…?

- LEA involvement in school networks
- Establishing a network of schools
- **Community leadership in networks**
- *'Making mathematics count'* in school networks
- The impact of school networks
- Sustaining a network of schools
- Facilitation within school networks
- Professional development in school networks
- Leadership of school networks

To order a copy of this series, please email **nlc@ncsl.org.uk** quoting the reference **WAWLA/Community leadership**

NCSL

National College for School Leadership