

## Collective Visioning

### Exercise 8

The goal of this exercise is to show that a group doesn't have to have only one leader; we all have leadership qualities, and together we can provide the leadership we need or identify what's missing that we need to bring in.

#### **Shared Leadership**

This is a leadership assessment exercise that I do with community folks, especially when they don't think of themselves as leaders.

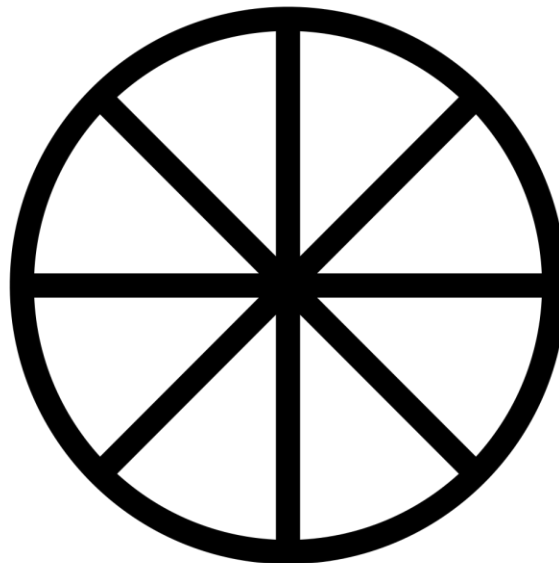
Start by asking people to identify what makes a good leader – the qualities or skills that are needed. The group will most likely create a long list, with items like these:

- Good speaker, visionary, problem solver, organizer, writer, manager, good fund-raiser, respected member of the community, and so on.

Next, ask people who among them has all of these qualities. So far, in my experience, no one has ever raised a hand to say that they have all of them.

Then, draw a circle like a wheel with as many spokes on it as there are items on the list (Figure 6).

Figure 6



Ask each person in the room to name one quality from the leadership list that they have. Write the leadership quality on one spoke of the wheel and add the person's name to the wedge of space. If other people have the same quality, add their names to the space as well.

If some people don't know that they might be good at or are shy about saying so, get their friends to help. Sometimes people will add things like making phone calls for outreach or organizing potlucks. One time, a woman agreed only that she was good at cleaning the office. We put that down but

encouraged her to come to all our workshops. She eventually became the leader for getting out the vote in her community.

After everyone's name is on the chart, ask about other qualities on the list that don't yet appear on the wheel. Some people are good at several things, and the group can decide where they are needed most. In some cases, the list may include a quality that the group doesn't possess. For example, when the folks at the Piedmont Peace Project did this exercise, we realized that we needed someone who could do an economic analysis. We recruited a Harvard student from Boston to help us in this area. Groups have gone outside their organizations to recruit people with special skills they need and don't have, such as photographers, media experts, architects, and so on. Or a group might decide to get one or more of their members trained in an important skill that they don't yet have.

Next, ask how many of the people whose names are on the chart can actually commit time. Then, ask someone who is good at a certain activity – for example fund-raising or speaking – if they would teach one or two volunteers how to do that activity, and ask for volunteers who would like to learn these skills.