



Leadership training with Libre Foundation

A brief introduction

Who we are, how we work

Libre Foundation is an organization that focuses on leadership training for community leaders of small Civil Society Organizations (budget < € 100.000/year) in developing countries. It started in 2008 and has now organized over 200 trainings of 5 days each. The training is conducted by experienced leadership trainers using a very interactive and relevant curriculum that helps community leaders to deal with practical challenges in their organization or community. It is an advanced approach that builds on very empowering, reflective and 'confrontational' methods for leadership development. See next page for examples.

Libre Foundation offers the training without tuition fees. Their trainers work on voluntary basis and Libre Foundation covers costs for travel and accommodation of the trainers. Libre Foundation works with local contact persons in developing countries who bring together a group of interested participants from Civil Society Organizations. The training is organized very low profile: no allowances, no fancy venues. The participants usually come from small organizations who are not accessing other leadership courses. After the training, Libre Foundation will offer follow-up refresher courses (2 days) within two years. Participants will have to cover their own travel costs and accommodation as a contribution to the free learning experience.

Innovative way of budget creation in The Netherlands

Most Dutch NGO's get their funds through subsidiaries and fundraising. Libre Foundation, however, operates with a private limited label on the Dutch market. We earn our own income by working for Dutch commercial companies, competing with regular training institutes.

Opportunities for collaboration

If you are interested in participating in a scheduled Libre Foundation course, do not hesitate to contact us: daphne@librefoundation.nl.

Local Project Coordinators

Libre Foundation is always looking for new partners to set up local trainings. We can collaborate and organize a new group in your region. All we need to get started, is a contact person, a group of 10-15 leaders of local Civil Society Organizations and about 5 reserve candidates, and a free venue. Send an email to daphne@librefoundation.nl to get the conversation started!

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Six examples of the sort of cases we address during the course

In the course, we zoom in on daily life and the difficulties the leaders encounter. Rather than teaching or instructing, we support the participants to develop new behavior that might help them to reach their own goals. We mainly do this through role plays, discussion and feedback. We listed six examples.

1) Perú

"I am leading a self-started day nursery, so my sisters and neighbors can go out and work during daytime. The government doesn't support us, because we live in an unofficial slum outside of Lima. All parents support me, by buying some food and clothes for me and helping me when I need them. I am really proud of what I do for the local society. But I don't know what to do with the father of Luis, because he is the only one that drops his kid without bringing new diapers nor toilet paper. Luis' mummy has passed away and his dad is a blunt man. I am a bit afraid of him and do not know what to do with the situation..."

2) South Africa

"I am the director of a large orphanage. During the training I practiced with the following situation: my gatekeeper lost the key of the main gate overnight. So we were locked in the next morning. I know that he had been drinking the previous evening, because he always does so after payday. In the morning he accused one of the more reliable children of stealing his key. I thought he was lying to me and felt like punishing him. But can I do that when I am not 100% sure?? And I also was wondering if there would not be a better way to show him how important honesty and responsible behavior is."

3) Kenya

"I live in a rural area, with very few chances for the youth. A few years ago, I managed to get some funds from a British NGO, to set up a carpentry school for the adolescent boys in my village. It really worked out, some guys actually made it their profession. But in the third year one of the church leaders approached me. She said that half of the money that was sent to the village, should be for the church. I denied. Now she is setting everybody up against me, slandering and gossiping. My wife is having a tough time. What can I do, with whom should I talk, what should I say..."

4) Ghana

"They taught me that Europeans are very trustworthy. If they say 'yes', you can rely on it. So now I am really confused. We work with a Dutch donor-NGO. Every now and then they send over a board member to see how our irrigation project is proceeding. And for years in a row, they tell me they trust us. So why are they always checking and double-checking our financial reports? And why do they keep questioning every spending we do? After 5 years of collaboration I am getting tired of hearing 'we trust you' and reading emails that show the opposite...what can I do without offending my most important counterpart?"

5) Rwanda

"I am the Rwandan program manager of a project for street children. Together with the international board of this large NGO, we decided to start an exciting pilot, putting the children in the board so they can decide over their own future. They would be able to make certain decisions and be responsible for the daily coordination of activities. There would be democratic elections, task descriptions and I would be the overall mentor and supervisor. When we discussed it in London, it seemed a great idea. But I wasn't able to explain it well to my staff. They refused to take orders from a 10-year-old, they said. I at least wanted to do the pilot and see if it would work out. In the training I practiced my listening skills, motivation skills and conflict solving skills. Most important lesson: it all starts with really listening to the resistance and opinions, instead of fighting their arguments."

6) Uganda

"We are working with hardly any funds. I know we can increase the impact of our work if we would have a real donor. We had a Danish NGO that supported us, but the money stopped after a year. I have written several applications to several countries, but the reply—if at all—is always 'application denied'. I don't know what we are doing wrong..."