Young Migrant Integration Leaders [EXEMPLAR]

IO1 – Integration Leaders Curriculum

Modul 7: Managing Micro Networks

Self-directed Learning Content

Introduction to the Module:

This is the seventh module of the Integration Leaders Curriculum. This module addresses the topic "Managing Micro-Networks" which includes tips or how to set yourself in the role of a leader, how to be comfortable with this role, what does it mean to be a good leader, what are the tasks of a group leader, how to motivate your group and, last but not least – how to overcome cultural and language barriers while working with your group.

Learning Outcomes Achieved:	**Knowledge**: Being aware of the importance of the role of a leader, knowing how to manage a group of people effectively, being aware of cultural differences and language barriers and ways to overcome them
	Skills: Effectively managing people, motivating others, being self-confident in the role of a leader
	Attitudes: approaching different people with patience and understanding, being able to lift spirits and motivate group, not being overconfident with own role, being open-minded and open-hearted toward others

Unit 7.1 The role of a leader

Let's start with defining what does it means to be a leader.

A Leader is, by definition, a person who leads others. If you are making some steps forward working with others and helping them in their efforts thinking of new ways to fight the problem and motivating others not to give up – then you are already a leader, and there is no election needed (Alan S.L. Wong, 2007).

A good leader is:

▶ Open-minded – especially toward new ideas of solving a problem
▶ Active – in order to motivate other people to get the work done, he has to work with them. Contributing even more time and effort than the rest of the group makes a difference between a boss and a leader.
▶ Friendly – good leader needs to understand other people and their current life situation
▶ Trustworthy – people need to trust their leader in order to follow him or her
▶ Confident – if you don't believe that you can make a difference, other people wouldn't believe in that as well
▶ Patient – working with people requires a lot of patience,

No everybody would make a good leader, and we have to remember that it is a quite complicated and really demanding task. If you feel ready to become one, make sure that you are aware of all your future tasks.

Tasks of the leader	
Setting yourself in the role of the leader	This task is really easy to bypass, yet it really important one. To lead your group you have to earn the trust of the rest of the group, To become a leader you need to behave like you already are one.
Motivating others	Have you ever heard about the socio-psychological phenomenon called diffusion of responsibility? The larger your group is, the less eager its participants will be to put some effort themselves, and they will wait for others to start working first. Your role as a leader is to make sure that everyone is giving the best in order to meet expected results as a group.
Engage your group	This task may be a bit similar to the previous one. Your task is to make sure that each person in your group is actively involved in your project. Ask every participant what are their expectation from these activities and what results they want to get. Keep them informed about their progress, guide them what should they do to get better results and highlight what they need to work on.
Let others hear about your activity	This task will help you and your group to gain more popularity. It is really important in

	some kind of task, like for example charity actions, to get more people involved in your project. Telling others what you work on with your group will either give you some help from outside the group are bringing more people to your group.
Keep it going	Don't settle down after finishing some tasks with your local group. You still have a lot of work to do. Meet with your group on regular basic and don't let your achieved outcomes to fade away,

How to set yourself in a position of a leader:

▶ **Put yourself in the position of a leader**
make sure that your group see you as their leader
▶ **Be confident about your competences**
prepare yourself to the role, be confident about your knowledge
▶ **Help your group to integrate**
if you want people to work together as a group you need to help them to feel comfortable around each other
▶ **Engage and keep track of each person**
if you see someone struggling – help him, motivate and encourage participants of your group

Being a leader is not an easy task but seeing the progress of your group is definitely rewarding.

How to integrate your group:

▶ **Use icebreakers** This easy and entertaining games will help a lot with integrating members of your group
▶ **Remember about breaks** A coffee break is a great opportunity to meet other people
▶ **Engage everyone in team-building activities** - those games are similar, yet more complicated than simple icebreakers, and instead of making people work individually, they are engaging the whole group to work as a team in order to complete given task.

You can find enormous icebreakers and team-building games easily on the Internet or even come up with them yourselves. If you are not sure which one to choose, check the table below for a few tips.

How to choose the right integrating activity	
Ice breaker game	- Make it short – choose a game that doesn't last more than 15 minutes, if you want integration to last longer you can always choose two or more integrating games - Keep it funny not stressful – remember not to choose an activity that may be stressful for some of the participants – like singing in front of the whole group - Make them move - if it is possible to chose activity that will require some movement
Coffee breaks	- Coffee breaks may help promote a mild mood and relaxing atmosphere by causing our bodies to release endorphins, and this will motivate them to keep on good work. - Make at least one 15 min coffee break every 2 hours.
Team building activities	- Those kinds of activities may help people in your group with cooperating and working as a team – choose an activity in which people would have to cooperate instead of rival

How to take care of your group

▶ **Involve everyone**
This may be a difficult task because it's easy to forget to focus on each person in the group. Keeping track on it will help you make sure that no one is left behind

▶ **Keep track of their work**
Make sure to know what your team is working on.

▶ **Motivate them**
Motivate your group and build a strong network of friends. Let them know that you appreciate their work.

▶ **Give them some space**
Do not try to control everything. Let them know that if they need your help all they have to do is to ask. This way you wouldn't have to check on them every five minutes.

▶ **Praise their progress**
Praising their progress and their achievements will keep them going.

▶ **Don't let them fight each other**

Games and their purposes
▶ Play any icebreaker game that will let members of your group know the other participants better and it generates a friendly learning environment.

▶ ***Defend the egg -*** The activity engages all participants in a process of defending the falling egg from crushing. It is a team-building activity, the members of your group will have to work together to build the structure that will prevent the egg from crushing.

Unit 7.2 Overcoming cultural and language barriers

Cultural and language barriers may be a serious problem if you are a leader of multicultural and Multilanguage group.

When it comes to cultural barriers it is good to start the first session by setting some rules regarding behaviour of all participants during all sessions. Start a session from writing down (e.g. on the whiteboard or a flipchart) list of rules. Ask participants what rules do they want what kind of behaviour they would find offending and so on. Tell them that they have to bear in mind that working in such a multicultural environment may lead to some faux pas, and not to give them too much attention as rules may always be modified.

The more you know about the different culture the easiest it is to overcome cultural barriers. It is always a good idea to learn some basic information about the country, culture, and manners of other people, especially if you know that you will spend some time with them.

Culture clash may cause significant implications at work, and in private life. It's not really possible to new all about different cultures, even if this knowledge would be really helpful in private and business life. For example, even as a typical gesture as „thumbs up" sign which means a positive expression of approval in most countries, in Bangladesh would be taken as an insult (Colin Lago, Lago, 2005).

Cultural barriers are not only about the meaning of gestures but also dress code, principles of good behaviour, manners and so on. The best way to get to know them better is to meet people from other cultures-if your group is multicultural use it as an opportunity to widen your horizons. Of course, if you want to avoid faux pas, you can always do some reading first.

Language barriers are a bit harder to overcome. It's not possible to learn a new language within days, so if somebody in your group doesn't understand a word in language rest of the group is speaking, it will make your work a lot harder. If you have more people speaking languages that you don't understand it would be exactly like in the story of building the Tower of Babel – you wouldn't get anything done.

If everyone in your group speak the same language, even if they are not fluent, yet have a decent language level you can work a little to make communication easier – like using more pictures or body language, giving people some time to check a word that they don't understand in dictionary, or using as simple words as t is possible (Kathrin Kutz, 2012).

Remember not to make fun of people who speak broken language – it means that they speak at least two languages.

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