

# Councillor's Guide to Learning Application

Companion to  
Training for Elected Leadership Series

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## FOREWORD

The results of training needs assessments conducted by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) have clearly demonstrated that training needs of local-government elected officials, mayors and councilors and other local politicians are among the most urgent world-wide and yet remain the least attended areas of capacity-building for local development and municipal management.

A number of countries as varied as Nepal and Poland, Uganda and Paraguay has recently embarked, for the first time in several decades, or for the first time ever, on a process of electing their councilors and mayors. Training needs of local-government elected officials are also at the top of the agenda in established municipal democracies such as Ecuador, India, Belgium and the United States of America.

To respond to these needs, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has developed and tested a series of training handbooks to assist councilors to represent the citizens, provide civic leadership and effectively work with central government and with the management, technical and professional staff in local authorities and other local institutions. The handbooks cover policy and decision-making, communication, negotiation and leadership, attending, managing and conducting meetings, councilors' enabling and facilitating activities, financial management and other related needs.

This *Training for Elected Leadership Series*, originally published in 1996 at the time of the Habitat 11 Conference, has been translated and adapted by UNCHS partners into over a dozen languages and has been used to train thousands of elected local government officials in Africa, Asia, America and Europe. As impressive as these numbers may be, they are still just a drop in the sea of training needs, and only the beginning of a global campaign.

Based on this broad testing experience and responding to the demand of trainers and participants of these workshops, the Centre is now publishing the *Councillor's Guide to Learning Application* as a companion to the *Training for Elected Leadership Series*. This Guide contains reading materials, instructions and forms designed to facilitate the learning process, to support the use of new knowledge and skills and to maximize the impact of training on improved performance of local government councilors and other local leaders.

It is expected that this Guide will further contribute to strengthening the capacity of local governments through the introduction of good leadership practices, one of the major objectives of the UNCHS Global Campaign on Urban Governance.

I wish to thank Dr. Fred Fisher and Mr. David W. Tees for preparing this and other handbooks in the series in collaboration with Dr Tomasz Sudra of the UNCHS (Habitat) Training and Capacity-Building Section. Preparation and printing of this series of manuals has been supported by the Government of the Netherlands within the Centre's Local Leadership and Management Training Programme. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of the trainers and local government officials in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Hungary, India, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and several other countries who assisted in the field-testing of these training materials.

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Guide contains materials for your use in preparation for, during, and following each of the workshops in the *Training for Elected Leadership Series*. It is designed to help you think about and plan ways to incorporate new knowledge and skills into your work as a local official. The Guide comes in two parts.

Part 1 is an essay that is intended for self-instruction. All you need is a quiet place to think, some time, and something to write with. For best results, we encourage you to write down your answers to the questions raised from time to time in the essay. The learning value of the information is multiplied many times for the reader who takes the time to do this.

Part 2 is a workbook consisting of questionnaires and worksheets to be completed during and after each of the workshops in the *Training for Elected Leadership Series*. We supply the actual worksheets to be completed with detailed examples of how the materials can be used to best advantage during and after a workshop. The workbook is in three sections.

1. Materials in Section 1 are to help you *set priorities* on your participation in elected leadership workshops and to decide on what you hope to gain in knowledge and skill.
2. Materials in Section 2 are to provide you with an organized way to keep track of things you experience *during* a workshop that might have important implications for a meaningful change in your performance and the performance of your council.
3. Materials in Section 3 are to assist you *after* a workshop to fulfill your commitments to apply what you have learned about improving your performance as a local leader and to prevent a "relapse" (i.e., retreating to old habits to avoid the discomfort associated with trying out new practices or ways of behaving).

From time to time in the workbook you will find information under the heading of "*trainer's notes*." You are welcome to read this information. However, it is meant to be used by workshop facilitators to help you make the best possible use of what you are learning when you return to your councillor position.

# **PART 1: ESSAY**

## **COUNCILLOR'S GUIDE TO LEARNING APPLICATION**

### **Definition**

**Application:** An act of putting to use. With respect to training for councillors, application refers to councillors making conscious and deliberate use of insights and skills acquired during an elected leadership training workshop to improve the performance of their duties and responsibilities.

### **Summary**

This Guide is designed to provide you with information and aids to help you make the most productive possible use of the various elected leadership workshops in which you will be participating as a councillor. If you have much experience as a workshop participant, you probably know that there are many barriers to the transfer of knowledge and skill from the learning environment into the day-to-day work environment. It is not our position that these barriers can be eliminated entirely. However, we do believe that much can be done before, during and after a new learning experience to encourage application for improved work performance. We also believe the successful learning application requires conscious and deliberate effort by workshop participants themselves, assisted by their facilitators, and supported by their peers both during the workshop and later back in the work environment.

### **Why be concerned about learning application**

Training is the accepted strategy throughout the world for workforce development. But, training is expensive. In order to preserve and enhance their huge labor force investment, local governments are investing more and more in formal training workshops. Good value for money invested in training is assured when: (1) the training addresses real performance discrepancies and skill needs; (2) the training is competently designed and delivered by experienced trainers; and, (3) those who have attended the training apply the knowledge and skill gained in training to improved work performance. All of these factors must be present for training to meet the expectations of those who invest in it. But it is the third that is the most problematic. Good training that addressed real needs and is skillfully designed and conducted will accomplish nothing unless those who are trained make the effort to use what is learned to correct discrepancies or to modify or change their behaviour.

There is growing recognition today of a gap between what is expected from training and what actually occurs. Researchers are finding that much of the skill development from training conducted in and for organizations does not result in improved work performance. In the 1980s, researchers Timothy Baldwin and Kevin Ford conducted a comprehensive survey of the literature on the transfer of learning from formal training into the workplace. In one study reviewed in the Baldwin and Ford survey, it was reported that only 40% of the content of the training programs being conducted was transferred to the work environment immediately after training. Even more disturbing, only about 25% was still being applied six months later and - the true bottom line - a mere 15% was still being used at the end of the year.<sup>1</sup> These findings reveal that organizations, including local governments, are spending huge sums of money on training each year that is not being fully used on the job.

This Guide is meant as an aid to trainers and participants at properly designed and delivered workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series* to get far better results from training than those reported above in terms of better individual performance and council leadership in general.

### **Councillor Training: A Case in Point**

It would be absurd for us to suggest that elected leadership training is any less vulnerable to the learning application problem than any other type of training. But, what are the pressures, pro and con, for you to make full use of what you have learned from training in elected leadership to improve your council effectiveness.

On the positive side, you have invested time and money in the training. The Elected Leadership programme is well designed, and the workshop you attended was conducted with thoroughness and enthusiasm. You see the value in much of what you have learned in making you and your council more productive and responsive. You also realize that the investment

made by your local government in training for you has value only to the extent that it converts what you have learned into improved performance in your various roles as an elected official.

On the negative side, the workshop is over now. You are back at work now and confronted by the same challenges that faced you before attending the training. "No problem," you may be thinking. "This training is good; I ought to start using it right away to be a better councillor." Certainly your intentions are the best. But old habits are strong, and it takes time, patience, and self-confidence to develop new ones.

On your first week back from training, for example, you find yourself in a meeting of city officials and citizens who have been working for months in vain on a plan for the redevelopment of a deteriorated area of the community. Donning your "facilitator" hat, you suggest a simple problem solving process to get the group moving again. It works! Your ability to help the struggling group is directly related to what you learned about the role of the councillor *as facilitator*.

But, what if it doesn't work? Perhaps your efforts are ignored. You may even be ridiculed for suggesting a process that seems out of character for you or for someone who occupies an elected official role. Should this happen, you have reached a critical crossroads in the learning process. Either you can continue to practice with the new councillor behaviours in the belief that the benefits over time will outweigh the immediate discomforts and risks. Or, you can abandon the application effort, writing it off as an interesting but not very practical experience.

From time to time in this essay we provide you with an opportunity to reflect on what you have just read and to make some notes in response to the questions we pose for you to consider. We have included such an opportunity below. Before that, and to help you reflect more deeply on the idea of learning application as applied to your role as an elected leader, please read the two situations that follow. One describes a councillor with a successful experience applying an idea from an Elected Leadership workshop to her own council role. The other is an unsuccessful experience owing to a councillor's disregard of the application assistance provided by the trainer. When you have read the two situations, take advantage of the opportunity to reflect before moving on.

## **An example of successful learning transfer**

Councillor A attended a workshop in the UNCHS *Elected Leadership Series* on *The Councillor as Enabler*. During a presentation by the trainer, Councillor A got an idea from something the trainer said: *"although it is well understood that local governments are responsible for the provision of public goods and services, it is not necessary that they be directly involved in producing them."*

Councillor A had never thought about public services being provided by another agency or organization. As she reflected on the statement, it occurred to her that few if any of her colleagues would agree with the notion that government's job is to steer the boat, not necessarily to row. So, she wrote the idea down on one of the worksheets provided by the trainer for use by participants to keep track of ideas they wanted to recall later.

Reading over her notes during a break, Councillor A made a preliminary list of councillor colleagues who would be supportive of the enabling concept and might entertain the possibility of partnering with other community groups in the delivery of some public services.

She was quick to try out the idea with another participant during a coaching session. Her partner urged her to examine the forces working for and against partnering as well as how to introduce the idea to her council. Councillor A incorporated all of these ideas into a plan of action that she intended to implement without delay on her return.

On returning home, Councillor A busied herself in gathering data on the experience of other local governments that had successfully partnered with other agencies and organizations in public service delivery. A plan for introducing the idea of partnering with other community groups in public service delivery began to take shape in Councillor A's mind.

An early step in her plan was to schedule a meeting with the mayor and several council members she had identified as like-minded on the idea of partnering to discuss her idea and research findings. From the meeting, Councillor A was surprised to learn that the idea of partnering had the support of those present. It was staff indifference to the idea that had prevented a serious discussion of it in the past.

Satisfied with the meeting results, Councillor A began to prepare a proposal to study several services currently provided directly by her local government that might be good prospects for alternative delivery through a partnership. And her name was on the list for the next workshop in the *Elected Leadership Series*.

### **An example of unsuccessful learning transfer**

Councillor B attended the same workshop on The Councillor as Enabler attended by Councillor A. During the same trainer presentation, Councillor B was intrigued by the concept of partnering with other community organizations in producing services that his local government had always delivered with its own forces.

Like Councillor A, Councillor B had never thought about public services being provided by another organization or agency. As he reflected on the statement, it occurred to him that few if any of his colleagues would agree with the notion that government's job is to steer the boat not necessarily to row. Rather than use the worksheets provided by the trainer as Councillor A had done to avoid forgetting about the intriguing idea, Councillor B decided to make a mental note of the idea and to bring it up with the mayor and city council at an appropriate time after returning home.

When the idea of coaching was introduced by the trainer as an aid in learning application, Councillor B chose to use the time to look for some gifts to take home for his children. His back-home action plan did include a reference to a briefing for his council on the partnership idea but without any kind of implementation strategy.

Councillor B returned home after the close of the workshop. A couple of weeks after returning from the workshop, Councillor B, before a council meeting, mentioned the idea of partnering to another council member. As he had expected, the reaction was not positive: *"Are you kidding,"* said his colleague. *"The voters won't standfor it. Besides, using another agency to deliver a service would mean loss of jobs for city personnel. I could never favour anything like that. If you value your position on the council, you won't either."*

The intensity of his colleague's reaction was enough to discourage Councillor B from bringing up the matter with anyone else. He never bothered to investigate what other local governments were doing to develop partnerships either.

It does not appear that anything Councillor B was exposed to at the workshop ever translated into change for the better in his performance or the effectiveness of the council as a whole. There is also reason to believe that Councillor B might oppose future expenditures on training for himself or his colleagues on the council as a poor investment of public funds.

### **Reflection**

What about you? Recall a situation in your own experience as a councillor when your efforts to try something new were met with resistance from others. What was the situation? What effect did it have on you and your performance? What might you have done to improve conditions for gaining the acceptance of others to your ideas?

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## Barriers to learning application

This Guide has been written on the theory that every training experience, even the best designed and executed, will encounter difficulties at the stage of learning application. In an earlier publication in the UNCHS (Habitat) Training Material Series, some of the common barriers to the application of learning in the workplace were identified. We have selected those which we feel are directly related to the probable hurdles to be cleared by councillors returning from one of the elected leadership workshops.<sup>2</sup>

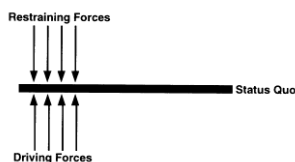
1. **Lack of council involvement in initiating the training process.** If the mayor and other councillors are not directly involved in recognizing the relationship between the training and needed improvements in council performance, they may have little interest in exploiting the benefits you can bring back from the training.
2. **Re-entry difficulties.** The transition from training to work can be difficult. You will find it quite easy to return to old habits and ignore what has been learned and its implications for improved personal and council effectiveness unless there is a "game plan" for applying new learnings to specific councillor roles, relationships and activities.
3. **Peer pressure to maintain the status quo.** Training is to produce learning, and learning calls for change. On returning home from an elected leadership workshop, you may find that your colleagues who have not attended the workshop may be indifferent or even hostile to the new ideas you are proposing. Sometimes your efforts to behave in more positive or constructive ways can be misinterpreted or viewed with suspicion by those who are not accustomed to the "new you."
4. **Unrealistic expectations.** It is not unusual when you have been through a powerful training experience to have great plans and high hopes for a major contribution to the organization. It is possible you are being set up to fail and will soon "bum out" when your application efforts are met with indifference or hostility. The unrealistic expectations of those who have not participated in the training can also be an impediment to learning transfer when the results they were expecting are not realized quickly enough or in the way they had hoped.

## Lowering barriers<sup>3</sup>

Nearly 50 years ago, a pioneering social psychologist named Kurt Lewin developed a change model that has potential applications for the design and implementation of a learning application programme. Lewin believed that a change in an existing social system can best be viewed and managed as a threestep process:

1. **unfreezing** (discovering a new skill or behaviour you wish to begin using in your council role);
2. **exploring** (seeking opportunities to apply what has been learned in the way you carry out your council role and to analyze the results;) and,
3. **re-freezing** (incorporating the new skills into your role and behaviour as a councillor or rejecting them and returning to the status quo).

Lewin suggested that every organization, group or individual is at an equilibrium point or balance between the forces that oppose change and the forces that support it. Change represents a disruption of the equilibrium. The choice to refreeze at a new equilibrium (i.e., accept and apply the new skills from elected leadership training), or maintain the status quo, depends on the interplay of two opposing sets of forces. The process of analysing the factors working for (driving forces) and against (restraining forces) change is called *force field analysis*.



For example, a councillor has completed a UNCHS workshop on *The Councillor as Enabler*. The councillor returns to his/her council seat appreciating the importance of getting more things done through other community groups and organizations. This councillor can be considered to be at an equilibrium between forces driving for change (e.g., enabling others in the community to play more active roles in community affairs and get the credit for it) and forces restraining change (e.g., maintaining an image of the councillor as the prime mover and shaker in the community). For change to occur (increased sharing of power with other community groups) the balance must favour the driving forces.

Most practitioners of force field analysis would agree on three tactics for bringing about change:

- 1. identify the driving forces for change and try to increase the strength of one or more of them;
- 2. reduce or remove some of the restraining forces; and,
- 3. change the direction of the forces.

**Reflection**

Barriers to the application of learning exist in every organization. Take a few minutes to examine the barriers that exist in your organization to your interest in applying learning from an *Elected Leadership Training* workshop. What are some of the restraining forces? Some of the driving forces? Given the preceding discussion, what tactics would be most effective in lowering the barriers?

***Restraining Forces:***

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***Driving Forces:***

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***Tactics for unbalancing the forces in the direction of change:***

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## Planning for learning transfer

Our purpose in writing this Guide is to concentrate attention on the councillor as learner. We hope to confront the obstacles so often placed in the path of councillors who have just completed one of the programmes in the *Elected Leadership Series* and what we believe can be done to smooth the path a bit.

An observer of the training business more than four decades ago pointed out three necessary conditions for training to transfer. First, the training content must be applicable to the work to be done. Second, the person being trained must want to learn what is being taught. Third, the person being trained must be motivated to apply what has been learned.<sup>4</sup>

As we have observed, the third condition is the most problem prone. Authors Broad and Newstrom promote the idea of a partnership for correcting transfer problems. They include those doing the training (trainers), those being trained (councillors attending elected leadership workshops) and those with a personal and organizational stake in using training to make the organization more effective and productive (the mayor and members of the city council). These authors also promote use of specific transfer strategies:

- at the work site before the training begins (e.g., obtain agreement within the organization for specific performance criteria and holding participants in training accountable for results);
- away from the work site during the training (e.g., provide participants with application-oriented objectives, individualized feedback and access to opportunities for systematically noting new ideas, working in support teams for the exchange of ideas and creating individualized back home action plans); and,
- back at the work site after the training (e.g., debriefings, opportunities for skill practice and positive reinforcement from peers for demonstrating desired behaviours).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1 on the next page shows 27 learning application strategies that are believed suitable and effective for the councillor participating in an elected leadership workshop. The strategies are arranged in a matrix by when - before, during or after the training - and by whom of the principal partners in the application process responsibility should be given for assuring strategy implementations.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1: The Learning Application Matrix

	<b>Pre-Training</b>	<b>During Training</b>	<b>Post-Training</b>
Mayor/Non-participating Councillors	Involve councillors in setting post-training performance goals.	Protect councillors in training from unnecessary distractions and interruptions.	Debrief councillors in training to discover what took place and review their learning application plans.
	Public acknowledgment for councillors who take time to participate in professional efforts.	Transfer scheduled councillor assignments to peers on a temporary basis.	Provide opportunities for councillors to practice new skills and provide public acknowledgment of success.
	Officially recognize elected leadership training as potentially beneficial to council effectiveness.	Take part in activities designed to encourage the use of new skills to improve overall council effectiveness.	Reinforce efforts to apply new skills and schedule briefings with other members of the council as appropriate.
Trainers	Align training with the needs, goals and priorities of local elected leaders.	Develop an understanding about what trained councillors can do to put new skills to use in their roles.	Create expectations that success will follow from efforts to apply learnings.

	Involve council participants in needs assessment and in the review of training designs for relevance.	Help councillors to apply learning and to visualize doing in their roles what they have learned.	Follow-up through writing, calls, and on-site visits to review results and help remove obstacles.
	Distribute pre-training materials and data gathering to stimulate councillor readiness and interest.	Use performance aids to enhance learning retention and to reinforce application commitments.	Conduct evaluation surveys and refresher sessions and feedback results for councillors and their peers.
Participating councillors	Use any opportunity to provide input into workshop planning.	Develop a plan for using skills to improve personal and council performance.	Review training materials for retention of knowledge and skills.
	Anticipate the many opportunities for better performance made possible by the training.	Compile a record of learning to avoid memory loss after returning home.	Review efforts to apply learning to performance improvement and assess the results.
	Commit to active participation in all planned training events.	Make commitments to other councillors at the training to follow through n applying what has been learned.	Maintain contact with other trained councillors with whom application commitments were made.

## Pre-workshop: readiness assessment

It is generally believed that persons to be trained will be more receptive to training, and more likely to apply what they learn, if they view the training as relevant to their needs. We concur with this view. Accordingly, we have devised a way for councillors to assess their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the 11 elected leadership roles. Part 2 of the Guide includes an *Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire*. The questionnaire, complete with instructions and examples, is to help councillors assess their current proficiency in each of the roles and, with this information, to decide which of the workshops in the series to attend and in what sequence.

Additionally, you will be expected to make some decisions ahead of time about specific improvements in each of the councillor roles and to write performance improvement objectives for each of these roles. Written objectives will help your peers on the council to understand what you hope to gain by attending the training and how it might contribute to a better council. In addition, written objectives provide a meaningful way (could be the only way) to measure the impact of training on the council, the organization and, perhaps, even the community.

## In-workshop: Planning for learning application

Shared experiences. The opening hour of a workshop is not too soon to be concerned about the application of learning. At all workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series*, therefore, we hope trainers will invite councillor participants who have attended any of the other workshops in the series to share their insights and experiences and to ask questions of one another. For example, one of them might say: *"It really helped me in my decision-maker role to understand the difference between a problem and a solution. What about you?"* Half an hour spent reviewing experiences should be enough along with a reminder that future workshops will start off the same way. The sharing technique assures continuity and is a strong incentive for workshop participants to do something to apply new knowledge and skill.

**Learning objectives.** You also may be asked to share your objectives for the workshop you are attending either with the trainer, another participant, or the entire group. How this is done may vary from trainer to trainer. The development and articulation of objectives assures a common understanding about important areas of performance improvement, gives you something specific to focus on during the training and helps to build commitment to make use of the new skills in your councillor role.

**Notes.** It is your responsibility as a trainee to take responsibility for your own learning and for identifying opportunities to use workshop materials to sharpen your performance as a councillor. Part 2 of this Guide contains a set of worksheets called *Notes for Learning Application* for you to use throughout the workshop. The worksheets are a convenient place to record interesting and useful ideas with application potential as they occur instead of waiting to the end of the workshop and then relying on your recall ability. The notes are a visible record that can be shared with colleagues on the council and evidence of progress in the achievement of preworkshop learning objectives.

**Peer planning and coaching.** You will have an opportunity near the end of each workshop to work with another training participant to begin thinking about, practicing with, and planning how to make good use of learnings from the workshop in your responsibilities as a councillor. Rather than do this alone, you will be paired up with another participant for an hour or so. During this time, each of you will be a coach for a time and, in turn, will have an opportunity to be coached.

What does it mean to be a "coach?" A person serving as a coach in an elected leadership workshop helps another participant think about and plan for the transfer of workshop learnings in his or her council role. This is done by a combination of services: asking questions to clarify meanings; role playing new behaviours to build a participant's confidence in using them later; and even challenging a participant whose thinking appears to be confused.

**Effective coaching behaviour.** Authorities on coaching agree that the following behaviours and practices are particularly effective in helping a training participant plan for the use of workshop knowledge and skills on the job. We urge you to consider using them when participating as a workshop coach.

1. Confirm that the person being coached (the participant you are paired with) is serious, really wants help, and is prepared to accept full responsibility for what does or does not happen after leaving the training.
2. Set some ground rules for the coaching session like avoiding use of the words "I can't" and "I'll try" and substituting the words "I can" and "I will."
3. Concentrate on how to do positive things rather than "how not to do" negative things. With respect to timeliness, for example, it is better to encourage someone to be on time for meetings than to caution them not to be late. Coaching someone not to do something will inevitably result in them doing it; in other words, the unwanted behaviour becomes self-fulfilling.
4. Listen actively (head nodding, good eye contact, verbal acknowledgment, paraphrasing, etc.) for understanding and use questions to keep the discussion on track and moving forward.
5. Strongly encourage skill practice with new, learned behaviours using role playing, demonstrations, tape recording, or other methods. Provide an environment where it is OK to fall, and keep at it until the other person feels comfortable with the new behaviour.
6. Get a commitment from the other person to apply what he or she has learned and reciprocate.

**The learning application plan.** A final and important step for you to take before the end of this workshop is to prepare a written plan for using new knowledge and skills. The re-entry plan (your transition from the workshop back into your day-to-day responsibilities as a councillor) is to help you:

- articulate important changes you have decided to make specifically and in detail with respect to what, when, who, where, and how; and,
- anticipate the effect these changes are likely to have on other councillors, the local government staff, and stakeholders on whom your actions will have an impact.

Begin the process of re-entry planning by reviewing your workshop notes and recollections. Choose one or more learnings that you believe could have a particularly significant impact on your organization and on your future effectiveness as a councillor. For example, you may have decided to take advantage of some insights from *The Councillor as Power Broker* workshop to share more of your councillor power with the staff, giving them more flexibility to make day-to-day decisions. You see this as beneficial to the staff and the organization in the long run. This decision could become the cornerstone of your re-entry planning, focusing on realistic ways for you to let go of power without appearing weak to the staff and without your feelings of anxiety getting out of control.

Describe what you intend to do as specifically as possible. A useful way to specify the action you have in mind is to ask these questions about it:

1. **What new ways of doing things am I considering?** Perhaps you want to encourage the city council to adopt a policy that gives the city manager authority to approve purchases that do not exceed a specified amount of money without advanced approval by the city council. The intent is to reduce delay for council action on routine purchases.
2. **Under what conditions will this occur?** Anytime the item or items to be purchased are required for the conduct of government business and where funds are available in the requesting departmental budget to make the purchase.
3. **Who else will be involved?** The mayor and other members of the city council who must approve the new policy and the city manager who is to assume greater responsibility for many purchase decisions.
4. **By when do I expect to see results?** Within 60 days after returning from this workshop (The Councillor as Power Broker).
5. **How will I know it has been successful?** Adoption and publication of the new policy; noticeable reduction in the number of routine purchase items that appear on the agenda for city council consideration.

Continue by making a list of all the issues that are likely to confront you back home as you take the proposed action(s). Review the consequences (i.e., what could go wrong or who might pose a barrier to successful performance). If the consequences are unfavourable, plan one or more actions you might take to create a more favourable environment for the action. Going back to *the power broker example*, you could plan to minimize your own discomfort (consequence) about turning over some of your authority to stailr (transfer of learning). You could do this by asking the staff to give you regular feedback (planned action) on their decisions and outcomes related to the use of this authority.

The value of re-entry planning is that it improves your chances for success with the application of new learnings by carefully describing what you have in mind and helping you to avoid or minimize the potential risks that accompany any change effort.

## Post-workshop: putting new skills to work

This is the point in the learning process where you find yourself back home and, challenged by the pressures of your work life, often tempted to put aside your learning application plan. We know you don't want that to happen, so we have provided you some suggestions for avoiding a relapse into old habits.

**Establishing new work habits.** As pointed out previously, the underlying purpose of the elected leadership training is to produce new work habits and behaviours that are relevant to the demands and expectations of your changing roles as local officials. In other words, this training series is designed to produce real changes in the way elected officials function in relation to the 11 roles included in the workshop series. Based on the exhaustive field testing these materials have undergone, they are capable of getting these kinds of results. The question is, what will you as a councillor choose to do with your experience as a learner? There are two alternatives. You can actively experiment with new ideas and concepts that have the greatest potential value for you in your role as a councillor and thereby contribute substantially to your development and your community's welfare. Or you can ignore the training and hang on to the old ways, losing your investment and the opportunity to make the contribution of which you are capable. It's just a choice; your choice.

We are aware that creating new work habits is hard work, even when your intentions to apply what you have learned are genuine. Research on the transfer of skills from training shows that trainees who have *acquired* new skills will be able to transfer them successfully only if they have the *confidence* to try the new skills on the job and receive *positive reinforcement* for their efforts.<sup>7</sup> Our purpose is to offer you some advice on how to overcome the many forces in you and outside of you that will encourage abandonment of your re-entry planning efforts.

**The re-entry dilemma.** As we begin this section of the Guide, we are assuming that you have completed one of the training workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series* and have returned home, high with expectations and armed with a reentry plan full of great ideas for change. So, what's the problem? It may come as no surprise to you that there are people in your work environment who may not be as excited about the possibilities for change as you are. In fact, your work environment may be a "minefield" of obstacles to the proposals you have in mind. To make matters worse, you have yourself to contend with.

Part of you may be bursting with enthusiasm to put new learnings to use. But, another part longs to maintain the status quo; to retain the old, perhaps dated, but nevertheless comfortable ways of doing things.

Then something happens to put you to the test. For example, let's say you have just returned home from a training centre after completing the workshop on *The Councillor as Enabler*. Within a day or two you will be attending a council meeting where you will be asked to vote on alternatives for managing the new municipal market. Your past experience tells you to retain control over the market as a potential revenue producer for the city by creating a new city bureaucracy to manage it. But, with your *enabler* hat on, you are more inclined to accept a management proposal submitted by a prominent community-based organization. Most of your colleagues on the council expect you to vote for the bureaucratic option based on your past record. Representatives of the community-based group do not expect support from you, seeing you, based on your past record, as rigid and uncompromising. Thus you find yourself with a predicament. Your head is inclined to vote one way and your heart another. You are teetering on the fence and are perilously close to a major relapse.

**Try relapse management.** It is quite common for those who want to transfer their learning over to their roles in real life to run into formidable obstacles, like the one described above. These obstacles may come from the work environment itself - insensitive council colleagues, skeptical staff, distrustful citizens. Or it come from within - growing doubts about the real-world usefulness of your proposals and what you are risking by pursuing them. As you put distance between yourself and the training without doing anything with the learnings, the more vulnerable you become to relapse.

A creative approach to handling the problem of training relapse has been developed by psychologist Robert Marx. His research has concentrated on helping individuals who have undergone significant behaviour changes prepare to return to immensely hostile and unsupportive environments. Marx has identified five factors in work environments which are strong indicators that a person who is recently returned from a workshop learning experience is subject to relapse: (1) work backlogs; (2) unsupportive co-workers. (3) distractive work pressures; (4) lack of selfconfidence; and (5) the absence of support from colleagues and friends.<sup>8</sup>

## Reflection

We have arranged Marx' five factors into a checklist. Read the five items and check those that were present when you returned to your work environment from your last training workshop. How many items did you check? The more items you check, the greater your potential for relapsing into old, more comfortable, but often less effective work habits.

Checklist of Relapse Indicators		
Indicators of Potential Relapse	Were they Present?	
	Yes	No
1. There was a large backlog of work that had to be handled quickly. Because old habits were easy to rely on, the pressure of work caused relapse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Co-workers did not support the new behaviours and prevailed on me to return to old work habits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Other pressures, organizational and personal, distracted me and caused me to return to more familiar ways of coping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I harboured doubts about my ability to use the new knowledge or skill effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. There was little support from elsewhere in the organization, or outside, for my wish to transfer new ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked three or more of these five indicators, we suggest you take the following five steps to protect yourself from succumbing to "relapse syndrome" in future attempts.

### Step 1:

Recognize that lapses are inevitable. If you come away from training with a strong vow to put your learnings to use and then fail to follow through, you may feel like a failure. You may be critical of yourself for being weak or begin to question the value or appropriateness of the training itself. It may come as a great relief at this point to recognize that a relapse is no

crime. In fact, it is inevitable and happens to everyone, particularly those who live in the presence of one or more relapse indicators.

**Step 2:**

Find a regular time to review workshop learnings. Make it a point, for example, to spend half an hour each month for this purpose, and do this within three months after returning from the workshop. Return to your re-entry plan and pay special attention to the obstacles you expected to encounter and what you planned to do to get around them.

**Step 3:**

Surround yourself with reminders of your transfer resolve. We recommend the use of pocket cards that are imprinted with application ideas and conspicuous wall posters with encouraging words in printed in large letters like ...

 **JUST DO IT!**

If this sounds a bit silly to you, don't worry; do it anyway. You'll find it works!

**Step 4:**

Cultivate a transfer partner. When relapse is a real probability, develop a transfer partnership at the earliest possible time if you did not do so during the training. Your partner, probably another local official who was attending the same workshop (maybe even the person who shared coaching responsibilities with you) should be a regular source of advice and support by phone, fax, e-mail, or direct face-to-face contact. There is no better source of learning reinforcement than another person with similar work responsibilities who has experienced what you have experienced and is trying, like you, to adapt learnings in a less than hospitable home environment. Stay in touch.

**Step 5:**

Keep an on-going record of your attempts to apply learnings. Make a written record of your attempts to use what you learned in work-related situations and what happened in each case. Be specific about what you did, what happened, who was involved, and other circumstances that might help clarify the satisfactory or unsatisfactory result. It is always useful to make notes on what you might have done differently and what you intend to do next time the opportunity presents itself. Record any missed opportunities to apply learnings with special attention to reasons why (fear, procrastination, loss of concentration, pressure of other responsibilities, etc.).

## **Final thoughts**

By a thorough reading of Part 1 of this Guide, you have taken an important step to improve your own effectiveness as a councillor. In Part 2 you will find the actual worksheets you will be using during each of the 11 workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series*. We urge you to faithfully complete these materials. Keep the completed forms close at hand and consult them regularly. Review them carefully and make some notes in preparation for any of the workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series* that you have yet to attend. Make a commitment to yourself to communicate regularly with your peer partner, particularly when you feel a relapse coming on. And, always remember...

*If you can Learn it, you can do it.*

## **PART2: WORKBOOK**

### **Councillor's Guide to Learning Application**

This workbook is designed to help you put into practice the knowledge and skill obtained from each of the workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series*. All of the materials in the workbook are reproducible. Photocopy the entire workbook and take it with you to each of the workshops you are registered to attend and use the learning application materials according to the instructions provided.

As you will see, the materials in the workbook are organized into three parts that correspond to the three phases of learning application discussed in the preceding essay.



1. Section 1 consists of an instrument called the *Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire*. The questionnaire is to be completed *before* you attend workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series*. Your answers to the questionnaire are for your personal use. They will help you assess your current level of performance in each of your roles as an elected leader. With this information, you will be able to decide which of the workshops in the series to attend and in what sequence.
2. Section 2 includes formats and instructions for materials that you will be using *during* each of the workshops. These materials are to start you thinking about the back home application of what you are learning. We have included examples to help you compose your thoughts more effectively as you complete these materials. Included is a format for composing workshop objectives and a set of worksheets for making notes to yourself on anything of learning value you want to keep for future reference. Also included are suggestions for a process that can help you work with another workshop participant to think and plan together for the back home application of new knowledge and skills. In addition, we are providing you with a *Learning Application Worksheet*. The completed worksheet will serve you as an action plan for using learnings from a workshop to improve your council performance.
3. Section 3 is an important resource for use *after* each workshop in the *Elected Leadership Series*. This is the point in the learning process where you find yourself back home and, challenged by the pressures of your work life, often tempted to put aside your learning application plan. We know you don't want that to happen, so we have provided you some suggestions for avoiding a relapse into old habits. Section 3 includes a worksheet that provides you with a convenient way to record the results of your efforts to apply what you have learned at the workshop. Space is also provided for you to record your progress in applying what you have learned. We hope you will want to share this information with participants at other elected leadership workshops you attend.

## Section 1-Trainer's Note

The material in this Guide is supplemental to materials in the *Elected Leadership Series*. If you have been a trainer for awhile, you have already found out about the implementation gap that separates the workshop environment from the workplace. This Guide has been added to the series in an effort to close or at least narrow the gap for a councillor taking one or more of the workshops in the *Elected Leadership Series*. You can be reinforcing the importance of what we call "re-entry planning." A good time to do this is at the start of the workshop when you are reviewing the workshop objectives with participants. Some of the participants, those who have attended other workshops in the series, will have a copy of the Guide and will be familiar with its use. Participants who are attending for the first time will not have used the materials and will need encouragement from you to use them.

Be sure to have blank copies of all three sections of this workbook for participants who may have forgotten to bring their copy of the Guide to the workshop.

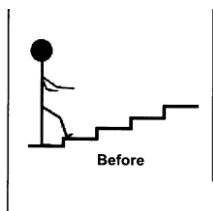
Read the instructions for completing the *Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire* with participants. Give them about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Then read the follow-up questions and be sure they understand what they are being asked to do before they get started. You may learn that some of the participants have already completed the questionnaire. If so, ask them to review their results and consider whether or not there have been any changes while other participants complete the questionnaire for the first time.

If this particular workshop is the one called *Perspectives on Training Elected Leaders*, Handbook 1 in the series, you will find considerable similarity between the assessment exercises in that handbook and this Guide. Since both exercises are intended to help participants examine their strengths and weaknesses as councillors, you may use either one of them.

When they have finished the questionnaire and accompanying analysis, ask participants to list two or three important learning objectives for their participation in this workshop. Suggest that they review the areas of performance improvement they had in mind when they were analysing the data produced by the *Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire*. Ask them what they would accept as evidence that they had been successful in attaining these outcomes. Give them about 10 minutes to respond to this task. Then ask for participant volunteers to discuss what they have written with other participants. Encourage participants to review their success in attaining these outcomes when the workshop is finished and discuss their performance improvement plans with the mayor and their council colleagues.

In addition, we have designed a method to assure continuity in the use of learning application materials and to provide a strong incentive for workshop participants to do something to apply new knowledge and skill. At the start of this workshop, you can help by asking participants who have attended other workshops in the series to share with one another their experiences applying what they learned, using information in the *Notes on Learning Application* (see Section 2) they compiled at one of these workshops. Everyone should be asked to offer experiences and insights and to ask questions of one another. Half an hour spent reviewing experiences should be enough along with a reminder to participants who are attending their first workshop that other workshops in the series are intended to start off the same way.

## Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Council \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

You are about to take a step that will enhance immeasurably your benefit from this workshop and other workshops in the UNCHS (Habitat) **Elected Leadership Series**. For best results, complete this questionnaire before attending your first workshop. You may complete the questionnaire and accompanying analysis at home. Otherwise, you may do so with the trainer's assistance at the start of the first programme for which you register as a participant.

## Individual Performance Assessment Questionnaire

We suggest that you complete this questionnaire before attending any of the workshops in the UNCHS (Habitat) **Elected Leadership Series**. The information generated by the questionnaire about your performance as a councillor in various roles will be useful to you in deciding which one of the 11 workshops to attend and in what order. If you do not have access to the questionnaire until you are in attendance at one of the workshops, the information generated will still be useful to you in deciding on future workshops in the series. The trainer will guide you through the process of completing and scoring the questionnaire.

## Instructions

This questionnaire lists the 11 roles that comprise the **Elected Leadership Series** and a scale consisting of three possible responses: *excellent*, *average*, *poor*. Under each of the roles is a description of the role. Begin by reading the first role statement and placing an "x" in the block opposite the role that best represents how you rate your present performance in the role. Continue until you have rated your present performance in each of the 11 roles.

ROLE AND DESCRIPTION	YOUR CURRENT PERFORMANCE		
	Excellent	Average	Poor
<b>Policy-maker:</b> My participation in establishing goals, examining alternatives, and determining strategies that will guide present and future actions to benefit the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Decision-maker:</b> My ability to make up my mind when there is an option or choice to make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Facilitator:</b> My initiative to foster collective effort, help others solve problems, and manage interpersonal and group conflict.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Enabler:</b> What I am doing when I help to make things possible, practical, and easier for others who are not quite prepared to do things for themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negotiator:</b> My ability to help others reach agreeable solutions when they have differing interests and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Communicator:</b> My ability to give and receive information, ideas, and feeling with accuracy and understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Financier:</b> My participation in making decisions about raising, allocating, and expending public funds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Overseer:</b> My efforts to ensure that the council and staff are doing the right things and doing things right through such activities as monitoring and evaluating policies, workshops, and services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Power broker:</b> My ability to use my own personal sources of power, as well as the power of official position, to get things done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Institution-builder:</b> My support for development of staff personnel and the local-government organization as important responsibilities of local elected leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Leader:</b> My capacity to exercise all of the roles at my command to help bring about positive and significant changes in the lives of my constituents and the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. On those roles which I rated my performance as excellent, what did I actually do to demonstrate excellence? *[For example, in your financier role, you might be proud of a decision in which you and other council members worked together to develop a simplified version of the annual budget that could be understood easily by interested citizens.]*

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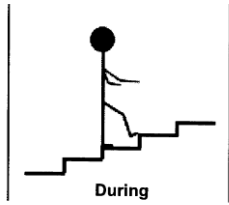
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## Participant Learning and Planning



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Council \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

You are participating in a workshop in the LTNCHS (Habitat) *Elected Leadership Series*. To take full advantage of the significant learning opportunities available from this workshop, we suggest you complete the learning notes, peer coaching, and application planning worksheets following the directions contained in this section. Your trainer will provide you with copies of any additional materials you need and make suggestions on how to make the best use of them during the workshop.

This section of the Guide is for use during a workshop to record experience with learning value and to make decisions about the back-home use of new knowledge and skills. There are two resources for your use:

1. *Workshop Learning Notes* for keeping track of what happens to you or others during the workshop that you want to remember, primarily things that could be of use to you in improving your performance as a councillor.
2. Some suggestions on activity we call *Peer Planning and Coaching*. We believe you will find this a useful process when you are being coached or, in turn, when you are serving as a coach to another participant.

In the space below, we recommend writing notes to yourself on important ideas, events, or developments during the training. Keeping a set of written notes is not like keeping minutes of a meeting. Rather, it is an opportunity for you to record ideas or information that you don't want to forget. It might be something the instructor says that is intriguing; a discovery from an exercise; an unexpected reaction from yourself or someone else; or the description of a work experience volunteered by another councillor that makes a light come on in your own mind. In thinking about what to write down, watch closely for ideas that are unconventional but thought provoking; ideas that could have significant benefit for your local government if adopted. In the space below are some idea categories and blank spaces for making written entries.

**Reactions to the training.** Something about the training *content* I particularly liked, did not like, or at least found interesting and worth further investigation.

**Example:** This is the first time I ever really understood the difference between problems, strategies, goals, and policies.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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3.

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4.

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5.

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[Use extra pages as necessary]

**Surprises.** Something about one of the *exercises* that was easier than I thought it would be or much harder than I expected.

**Example:** It was hard for me to make a distinction among the four statements in the policy maker's quiz.

1.

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2.

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5.

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[Use extra pages as necessary]

**Other discoveries during the training.** Unexpected or unconventional ideas that I find really interesting and I could use to improve my performance as a councillor or that would make an important difference in the way our council operates.

**Examples:** (1) It occurred to me that our council has no written policies we take a lot of things for granted that need to be formalized. (2) That other people make policies too - our staff, NGO managers, even business owners when they don't follow council policies.

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2.

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5.

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[Use extra pages as necessary]









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3. What can others or I do to increase or sustain this support?

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4. What and whom can I expect to resist or oppose my learning transfer efforts? You may be in for some surprises here. Sometimes those who are closest to you are the least supportive of your new ideas.

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5. What can others or I do to reduce or eliminate resistance or opposition?  
Note: effort to remove resistance is usually a more productive use of time and energy than effort to increase support. In fact, the removal of resistance can result in a new form or source of support.

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### Section 3 - Trainer's Note

The first few days after the close of a workshop are the most critical. Workshop participants, immersed once again in their councillor routines, are vulnerable to the relapse syndrome discussed earlier in the Guide. Deprived of trainer support and the friendly encouragement of their learning associates, councillors can easily justify the abandonment of commitments made during the workshop and return to the safe, comfortable world of "business as usual."

Aware of the potential loss to participants who give in to the relapse syndrome, there are further steps you can take to encourage and reinforce the commitments they made to themselves and each other before leaving the workshop. Certainly a letter or e-mail message congratulating participants on their attendance and encouraging learning application can help to keep attention focused on commitments made to follow through. Better yet, when possible, is face-to-face contact with participants several weeks after a workshop to review progress. Next best is contact by telephone. In either case, take time to ask questions about specific attempts to apply learnings and the results, focusing on ways to overcome any obstacles encountered. Suggest contact with other participants, particularly those who served in a peer coaching capacity. Also, remind participants that they will have an opportunity to share their experiences with learning application at the next elected leadership workshop they attend.

### Learning Application Progress



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Council \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop \_\_\_\_\_

You have completed one of the workshops in the LINCHS (Habitat) *Elected Leadership Series*. To follow through with the plans and commitments you made during the workshop, we suggest you complete the worksheet on learning application progress. Reflecting on what you have done with the learning from the workshop since returning to your councillor responsibilities may help you to strengthen any commitments made and assist you in benefiting even more from future workshops.

This section of the Guide is for your use after a workshop is over to examine and critique the progress you have made since the workshop to implement your learning application plan. This is our way of helping you avoid the relapse problem described in the preceding essay. This activity should take place at intervals after the workshop and should continue until you are satisfied that you have done all that you are going to do to incorporate workshop learnings into your council role and to influence your peers to do the same.

# Notes on Learning Application Progress

This space is for your use in making some notes on your progress in making use of knowledge and skills from the elected leader workshops in your own work as a councillor. As you attend more workshops, you will have more experiences to share in these notes. In particular, notice that space is provided at the end of this worksheet for you to enter some notes on what you intend to say to participants at the next workshop you attend about your progress in applying learnings.

1. Actions I have taken to apply back on the job the knowledge and skills I learned.

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2. Obstacles I encountered and what I did to work around them.

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2. Contacts I had with my transfer partners or other officials about learning application.

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Baldwin, Timothy T. and Kevin J. Ford, "Transfer of Training: A Review and Directions for Future Research," *Personnel Psychology* 41 (1988), pp. 63-105.
- <sup>2</sup> "Manual for Evaluating Training's Impact on Human Settlements" (Nairobi: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 1997), pp. 73-4.
- <sup>3</sup> For more information on force field analysis as a strategy for the application of learning in the workplace, see *Designing Human Settlements Training in African Countries, Vol. 2: Trainer's Tool Kit* (Nairobi: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 1994), pp. 79-81. Other editions of this manual are available for users in European Countries and in Asian Countries.
- <sup>4</sup> Mosel, James N., "Why Training Programs Fail to Carry Over" *Personnel Psychology* 34, no. 3 (1957), pp. 56-64.
- <sup>5</sup> Broad, Mary L. and John W. Newstrom. *Transfer of Training: Action packed Strategies to Ensure High Payoff from Training Investments* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 13-4.
- <sup>6</sup> *Manual for Evaluating Training's Impact on Human Settlements* (Nairobi: United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 1997), p. 78.
- <sup>7</sup> Byham, William C., D. Adams and A. Kiggins, "Transfer of Modeling Training to the Job," *Personnel Psychology* 29 (1976), pp. 345-49.
- <sup>8</sup> Marx, Robert D., "Relapse Prevention in Management Training: A Model for Maintenance of Behavior Change," *Academy of Management Review* (July **Councillor's** 1982), pp. 433-41.