



# LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY COURSE

Giving a new angle to relationships





---

# Leadership and advocacy course

Giving a new angle to relationships



This training course in human development, leadership and advocacy has been taught to 40 people from rural communities, both young and old, and 20 male and female leaders connected to CANTERA. This teaching/learning process has been given in the context of the project: “Young rural promoters: promoting sustainable communities through agroecology, Nicaragua”, in coordination with the project “Food security through agroecology: El Salvador and Nicaragua.” This project is funded by SCIAF, the EU, and the Big Lottery Fund (BLF).

Anabel Torres is the coordinator of this training course, and she has been impressed not only by how much the participants have learned, but also by the impact they are having on their communities. Developing these attitudes and skills has involved carefully designing what to teach, and how to combine theory with practice by using: educational techniques and tools appropriate for participants, a 12-theme focus, and creating materials that facilitate learning. Anabel Torres tells us about the process of leadership training:



“First we aim to develop the student as a person and strengthen their self-esteem and self-care. It’s so important for them to know that they are valuable under any circumstance and that they are the same as anyone else, no matter how they talk or dress. Secondly, you have to determine what tools they’ll need to improve their leadership capabilities and assimilate educational techniques so that they can teach their community the lessons they’ve learned.

Community work connects them with their own people. In this way, they develop new working relationships with other people, and as they learn to listen and to respect others, they develop their capability to work as a team...

By encouraging their participation in this type of school that uses more experience-based dynamics, we strive for each meeting to bring out the best in people. By putting youth together with adults, the older participants start seeing each young person from a different perspective and valuing different qualities about them. This brings a new angle to the relationship.

Sharing personal beliefs, customs, traditions, and viewpoints helps each participant feel part of a community, bond with the people that live around them, and view them as people they can count on, who will support them. In this way, they come to comprehend that they belong to their community, and feel a real sense of community support.



This sharing of knowledge fosters a very valuable opportunity to reflect on diversity. Differences in origin, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, or social class should help us understand that though we may be different, we are equal.

This teaches people to tolerate different opinions, defend their own, and debate with intelligence. Advocacy is all about learning to negotiate as an educated citizen without getting into an argument or committing acts of violence. When they evaluate a problem that bothers them, now they can go to the municipality with a proposal for agreed solutions that is supported by their community...”.

## **Purpose of the leadership and advocacy course**

Since leadership is a necessary part of advocacy and has many aspects to it, the responsibility does not fall solely on one person. This training course seeks to equip participants with basic methods to organise and unite the farming sector to carry out advocacy work.

Every day, communities face challenges to solve their various needs. In order to solve them, different stakeholders must join efforts and coordinate actions together. This requires an array of techniques, procedures, and principles that help attain an in-depth understanding of reality in order to build collective action.



When creating an advocacy plan, for example, when it comes to productive aspects, this collective action provides a guideline on how to solve problems related to production, sustainability and the wellbeing of communities.

### **What does a leadership and advocacy training course consist of?**

The training manual is the main conceptual and methodological support tool. With it leaders can coordinate opportunities for education and reflection that contribute to integral human development and that comprehend all aspects of being a community promoter and leader. The training manual is organised into four modules, which altogether amount to a total of 12 workshops:

#### **1. Gender equality and personal development**

- ✓ Self-esteem and self-care
- ✓ Cultural and local identity
- ✓ Gender identity
- ✓ Building non-violent gender relationships

#### **2. Designing development and popular education**

- ✓ Methodological approach to propose change
- ✓ Strategic approach to local and sectoral planning
- ✓ Methodology of popular education and participatory techniques

#### **3. Advocacy and revitalising local development**

- ✓ Design and practise of advocacy
- ✓ Farmer organisation and advocacy strategies
- ✓ Stakeholder mapping and advocacy

#### **4. Communication and negotiating conflict**

- ✓ Physical and emotional awareness
- ✓ Negotiation and conflict resolution

### **Outline of each workshop**

**Session name:** The name of the workshop explains the main content of the subject from the beginning.

**Why is this issue important?:** It's advisable to create a statement that clarifies the need for and importance of the said subject. It's important to have people read this paragraph very well before leading the workshop.

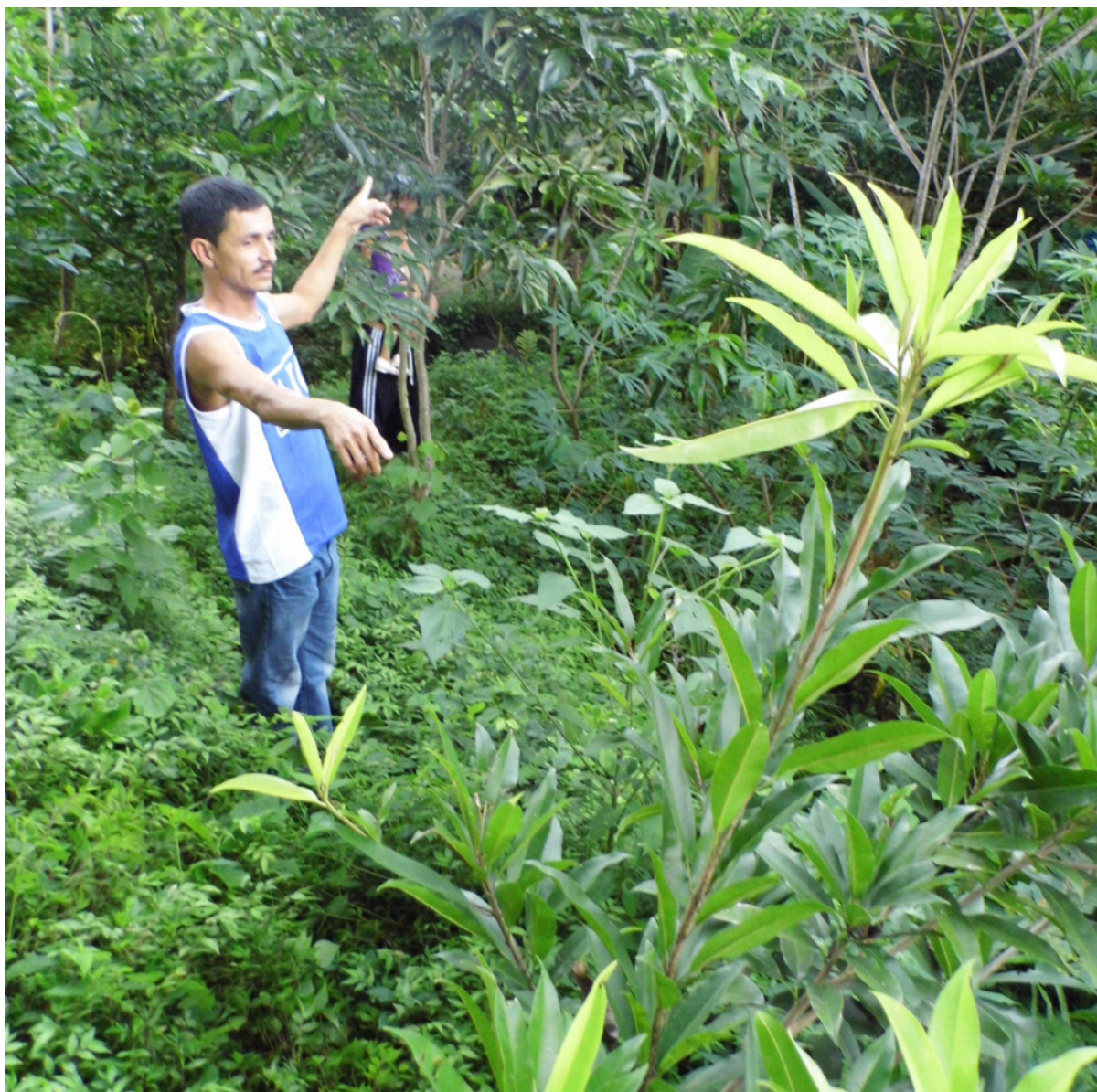
**Topics to discuss:** Here are presented the main topics agreed upon for each workshop.

**General objectives:** This is the "why" of the activity. It indicates the path to be taken and the goal to aim for.

**Materials:** List the teaching materials needed for each workshop so as to prepare them in time.

**Activity development:** Describe each of the activities step by step. It's important to study the content carefully in order to give clear instructions to the participants.





**Length and course of action:** Assign a length of time for each activity, taking into account how long is needed to complete the activities and discuss participants' feedback.

**Responsibilities:** Schedule a time to put into practice the ideas stemming from the activities and guide them towards action. Define the responsibilities that each participant will commit to after having experienced each workshop, and how they will

implement these activities with ten people from the community they represent.

**Main ideas that should be made clear:** Determine the main ideas and reinforce them together with the group in each workshop activity.

Each of the workshop sessions is intended to take place over the course of two days (about 12 hours). The implementation method for each



subject stems from participants' own experiences. They generate reflexion on the realities that affect the lives of the participants and the people around them, the circumstances they live in, and the situation of their country.

This training in human development is accompanied by validation of identity, communication, ethics, values, and cooperative relationships with all living beings.

### Materials, tools, and equipment required

- ✓ Roll of string
- ✓ Flip charts
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Sheets of paper
- ✓ Notebooks
- ✓ Pens and pencils
- ✓ Crayons
- ✓ Erasers
- ✓ Rulers
- ✓ Clay
- ✓ Computer or music player
- ✓ Relaxing, upbeat music
- ✓ Bell
- ✓ Balloons and ball
- ✓ Coloured cards
- ✓ The CANTERA game "Touring my Nicaragua"
- ✓ Relevant local laws and publications on issues such as gender equality, machismo, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- ✓ Photocopies on "Good living", "Educational models" and "Popular education methodological concept"
- ✓ A bucket, disposable cups, and a bottle per team
- ✓ Chart for identifying and prioritising problems
- ✓ SWOT analysis chart
- ✓ Example outline of an advocacy plan
- ✓ Photocopies of the stories "Pleasant View Forest" and "The Eagle"



## **Replication at FEDICAMP and adaptation in El Salvador**

This training course in human development, leadership and advocacy has also been taught to 40 people from rural communities, both young and old, and 20 male and female leaders chosen by FEDICAMP in Estelí.

CESTA coordinated and conducted the program in El Salvador, adapting certain sessions and workshop content to meet local needs and realities. There were 31 participants, 14 women and 17 men, all representatives of the three partner organisations of El Salvador: COMUS, CVX and CESTA. This course was called “Advocacy Leadership School”.

The communities in which the NGOs are present chose the participants to send to the Leadership School. One essential requirement was to belong to an organised group within their

community, be a promoter, or hold a leadership position. For example belonging to ADESCO (Community Development Association), Water Board, Women’s Group, Farmer’s Group, Youth Group, etc.

The course took place over 9 day-and-a-half sessions (12 hours per session) of workshops at the CESTA headquarters. In each session, participants worked on a module that included classroom training and community work.





No.	Workshops	Subtopics
1	Social gender constructs	Culture and identity
2	Self-care	Leadership Workload distribution between women and men
3	Masculinity and gender equality	Development
4	Human development and methods to promote change and transformation of reality: triple diagnosis	Sustainability and development
5	Local and social planning	Advocacy, participation and communication
6	Advocacy: different concepts and practises	Power
7	Power map	SWOT analysis
8	Advocacy steps	How to create advocacy plans
9	Advocacy plans	Local area advocacy plans Nation-wide advocacy plans Different advocacy strategies Food security and sovereignty





Each session cost \$436 USD and served 31 people. Costs included food, lodging and transportation.

Some of the **difficulties identified** are:

- ✓ In El Salvador, keeping people motivated to continue attending the workshops was very challenging. Eight people dropped out, so only 23 people complete the course (14 men and 9 women).
- ✓ Another important challenge for the three partner organisations in El Salvador to fulfil was to follow up and provide assistance to the groups. Their support is needed to carry out research programs and coordinate the creation of an Advocacy Plan for waste use and management with each municipality the groups were from. This presented an additional demand on the budget and technical staff.
- ✓ In the countryside, self-esteem is very low, especially in women, who are told that they should stay at home, taking care of household duties. Girls are controlled and censured, and not permitted to make friends with boys. Otherwise, they will be the brunt of gossip.
- ✓ There is a problematic belief that once a woman is married she should never leave the house because she is the property of an owner. When she has children it is even worse, because she is monitored by her own family.
- ✓ Local knowledge is undervalued and little acknowledged, even by the locals themselves. Though farmers have a great wealth of knowledge of production and society, it is not enough to face social, economic, and political circumstances.
- ✓ The lack of generational replacement is a significant issue. Parents are not



instilling a love for the land in their daughters and sons. People tend to think that if they let their children inherit during their lifetime, they will sell the land and leave their elderly parents on the street. So landless younger generations often get discouraged and migrate to the cities.

## Recommendations

- ✓ There needs to be local motivation that encourages course participation, fostered and coordinated by government entities, local organisations, groups, and NGOs.
- ✓ During workshops, there must be a climate of trust between facilitating staff and workshop participants.
- ✓ Explain the lesson slowly and in simple language, so that the main points of each subject will be clearly understood.
- ✓ Promote the participation and sharing of opinions of every member of the group. Have them reflect and analyse based on their knowledge and life experiences in order to contribute to collective knowledge. When doing the final summary of the exercises, take into consideration all the contributions from each of the participants. Make them see the importance of their participation.
- ✓ Within the expected results are the advocacy plans in El Salvador and Nicaragua. In El Salvador, the three partner organisations jointly determined national courses of action. Each organisation's project area has a local advocacy plan on a certain subject, and partners have an advocacy action plan on the subject of food security and sovereignty on a national level.
- ✓ Communities have male and female leaders with higher training on issues of gender, self-care, and advocacy, who help to deal with municipal institutions and create dialogue with other community actors for local development.
- ✓ It's important to understand the local and national context in order to identify the root causes of situations and find potential solutions, where each person can see themselves as a key factor for the desired change.

This publication has been produced with the support of the European Union. The content is the sole responsibility of the author and in no case should be considered as reflecting the views of the European Union.

### Credits

**Production:** Roberto Vallecillo • **Revision:** Lutgarda Barahona, Louise Joyce, Mark Camburn • **Translation:** Juliana Marín, Mark Camburn • **Photography:** Pascal Chaput, Roberto Vallecillo, CESTA archive • **Design:** Enmente • January 2018



[www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund  
19 Park Circus  
Glasgow G3 6BE  
T: 0141 354 5555  
E: [sciaf@sciaf.org.uk](mailto:sciaf@sciaf.org.uk)

SCIAF is the official overseas aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. Registered in Scotland No: SC012302 Company No: SC197327

<http://europa.eu/>