

Self Improvement and Collective Improvement

By Jean Teng

One of the most insightful things I learned from the *Student Leadership Training Booklet* and am continuing to learn from working on our class project is that leadership training and getting things done can simultaneously be achieved through shared leadership. It seems counter-intuitive coming from a traditional Western colonial perspective of leadership, but it really is the essence of grass roots organizing. Especially for immigrant workers who are organizing themselves with little resources, the only way to do so is to learn while doing and taking a very hands-on approach. This kind of approach of leadership development as a continual process is very applicable to any kind of group work. It is not only a way of doing things, but a new way of thinking about things and orienting to a new guiding concept. Thinking about each member of a team as an equal asset and mentor and growing stronger individually and collectively as a group is a very powerful tool. I think that the results will be clearly successful. Orienting to this model of leadership can help instill a more proactive and motivated attitude toward any kind of work or job. Its main focus is on self-improvement and collective improvement. Being in a team is no longer a passive role under a stereotypical leader.

I feel that I am working well with others and being open and appreciative of anything my committee members can contribute. I think that my committee has done a good job of recognizing each person's connections to different resources and pooling those together. However, I do feel that we could do a better job in being mindful of everyone's existing leadership skills and a new skill each person wants to develop. I think that because of the little time that we have during class and meetings, we get caught up on just getting things done by whoever can do them rather than taking the extra effort in skill-building. I think that is the

greatest weakness of my committee and that we should be aware of that and start improving.

Shared responsibility is also something our committee needs to work on. Even though some people may have more connections and resources than others, more work shouldn't necessarily fall on their shoulders. Other students can partner up with them and thus develop new connections and resources themselves. I think that within our committee, each member needs to believe that every other member is counting on them to be there and that their attendance and contribution are vital to the committee. If we just think that other people will take care of it, then our shared leadership will break down.