

Action for Life 4 (AfL)

Factsheet

Background

Action for Life (AfL) is a seven-month leadership development program. The course uses a combination of interactive training and fieldwork to expand the capacity of each participant. Distinctively, participants and staff come from different generations, nations, and faiths to form a diverse learning and working community that represents an increasingly globalised world.

An international faculty delivers a curriculum focused on team-building, cross-cultural communication, conflict transformation and program development and management.

*The multifaith,
multicultural diversity of
AfL makes it a
microcosm of the world
“We are the message...
How we live, think and
speak. There is no other
message. The idea that
people can change in a
fundamental way and
that can be the catalyst
for wider change
affecting society, nations
and the world, stands or
falls by how we
demonstrate it.”
-Brian Lightowler*

Throughout the program, AfL emphasizes the importance of building personal integrity and strong teamwork in a multi-cultural, multi-faith environment. After AfL, each participant is expected to become a values-based leader creating positive changes in their own communities. This fourth Action for Life program contributes to a growing network built on the previous three programs, conducted in 2001/02 and 2003/04 and 2005/06.

Action for Life gives the world:

- a living symbol of global community
- a force and network that inspires and supports others to make positive changes in the world by beginning with themselves
- a platform for young people to bring their visions for their nations into reality
- a connection between change makers across cultures, religions and generations
- a new generation of leaders equipped with integrity and faith

How

Action for Life develops leadership in participants by:

- engaging different cultures and the issues in the countries they travel through in Asia and Africa
- appreciating different religions and beliefs while helping to deepen their understanding of their own faith
- developing their spiritual discipline of listening to the inner voice and taking action
- experiencing community through living and working in an international, multi-ethnic and multi-faith team
- cultivating their self-awareness, both through their eyes and the eyes of others
- creating encounters with respected change makers
- being a caring, supportive network in which to grow and learn
- giving workshops and experiential training in communication, facilitation, team-building and public speaking
- offering opportunities to use new skills to run conferences, camps, cultural events and other presentations

*“There is a knock at
the door of our
imagination and we
usually open it enough
to glimpse amazing
and alarming
possibilities for our
lives. It always
involves the invitation
to serve the world and
a purpose bigger than
ourselves, but the door
is most times quickly
shut and the vision
lost, mothered,
smothered out of us in
the interests of career,
security and the many
temptations to self
interest.”*
-Jean Brown

Contact

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Finances

AfL is a program within the framework of Initiatives of Change. It therefore benefits in many countries from charitable or equivalent status as defined by respective national legislations.

Less than half of the total AfL budget of approximately US\$245,000 comes from participants' fees and seed money from the previous program. The remainder has to be raised by support from around the world. Costs are kept to a minimum through the generosity of local hosts and through travelling and living as simply as is practicable. The budgeted operating cost for AfL4 over seven months comes to just US\$6,000 per participant.

Participants are asked to raise their airfare to Asia and home again, travel insurance, and US\$3,000 (slightly variable with exchange rates) towards their costs during the program. This figure only covers half of the actual cost per person for this 7-month program. Trainers and support staff all come on voluntary basis.

Fundraising is one of the major tools that we suggest is used to make AfL4 a reality for participants. It is a part of engaging others. Fundraising allows a sharing of conviction and vision with others and to invite them to share a role in this journey. Therefore, we seriously consider how we keep supporters informed and connected with each individual's outer and inner journey.

Initiatives of Change

Action for Life is facilitated by Initiatives of Change, and draws on Initiatives of Change's 60 years of considerable experience in international reconciliation and peace building. It is a movement of people from all races and faiths who work towards change, locally and globally, by starting with change in their own lives.

It works on simple principles: honest introspection and a framework of absolute moral standards - honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. Personal transformation comes not just through facing one's shortcomings but doing something about them giving back what we've cheated others, seeking to rebuild broken relationships, forgiving those who've humiliated us, apologizing to those we've exploited, ending our addictions and personal injustices.

While embracing people of all religions - and, for that matter, no religion - Initiatives of Change builds on a faith that each of us, if we listen consistently and quietly to that 'inner voice' of guiding truth/conscience/God/the Divine, can find our part in transformation and healing in our homes, homeland and humanity.

Over decades, this network has evolved and created new initiatives to address a rapidly changing world. Action for Life is just one of them. African women are working to become Creators of Peace, young people in Eastern Europe are reinforcing Foundations for Freedom, bureaucrats and business leaders are creating better government in India at the Centre for Governance, victims of conflict are focusing on an Agenda for Reconciliation, interracial groups in America are generating Hope in the Cities and more. For Further information, and for a list of contacts in your area, visit Initiatives of Change on the web at www.initiativesofchange.org



Initiatives of Change

Building trust across the world's divides