

Factsheet

Background

Action for Life (AfL) is a 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 consolidating personal change and development, team-building, cross-cultural communication, conflict transformation and program development and management.

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 fifth Action for Life program with a special focus on equipping participants in delivering several lofC programmes/workshops will contribute even more greatly to a growing network built on the previous four programs, conducted in 2001/02 and 2003/04, 2005/06 and 2008/09.

Action for Life gives the world

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

How

Action for Life develops leadership in participants by:

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

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, Brisbane

“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, Adelaide

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 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 AfL5 over five months comes to just US\$5,000 per participant. Participants are asked to raise their airfare to Asia and home again, travel insurance, and US\$2,500 (slightly variable with exchange rates) towards their costs during the program. This figure only covers half of the actual cost per person for this 5-month program. Trainers and support staff all come on voluntary basis. Fundraising is one of the major tools that is used to make AfL5 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 - purity, honesty, 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' 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.iofc.org

Contact

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Initiatives of Change

Building trust across the world's divides