

Action Learning: Problem solving for better NS functioning



Many national societies are facing challenges in the area of financial sustainability and are looking for opportunities to improve their governance. Resolving these challenges requires finding solutions to complex problems. Action Learning is an IFRC endorsed tool for working through difficult problems and identifying creative and workable local solutions.

- Do you need to resolve a complex and important problem urgently?
- Are you struggling to find a clear path forward?
- Do you feel caught in a swamp of uncertainty?
- Action Learning is the solution!
- Action Learning is a structured problem solving tool that uses shared local leadership and learning to get rapid solutions.

WHAT IS ACTION LEARNING?

Action Learning is a widely accepted tool for solving real-life work-based problems. It has been widely used in settings that are fraught with problems and challenges, and is particularly effective for solving complex problems. It elevates the leadership, collaboration, creativity, and courage of groups.

Action Learning uses a coach to guide group members on the functioning of the group using questioning and reflection, rather than allowing the team to jump to trying solve the first problem identified. Action Learning participants gain leadership skills as they solve difficult problems.

The World Institute for Action Learning (WIAL) has partnered with the IFRC to provide highly skilled, professional coaches pro-bono for a limited time.

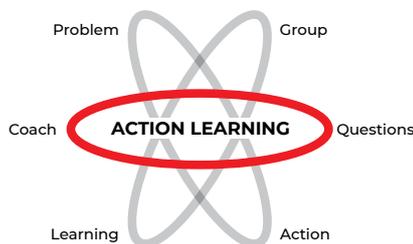
WHY USE ACTION LEARNING?



Financial sustainability and building resilience in the context of COVID-19 is a complex problem with multiple influences. Brainstorming the 'problem' often creates further complexity and uncertainty about pathways forward. The result can be increased work with little tangible benefit and rising frustration.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Action Learning tackles problems through a process of first asking questions to clarify the exact nature of the problem, reflecting and identifying possible solutions, and only then taking action. Questions build group dialogue and cohesiveness, generate systems thinking and innovation, and enhance learning.



1. Problem

The problem should be urgent, significant, and the responsibility of the team to resolve.

2. Action Learning Group or Team

The Action Learning team is ideally composed of 4-8 people with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

3. Process of Insightful Questioning and Reflective Listening

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4. Action Taken on the Problem

Action Learning requires that the group be able to take action on the problem it is working on.

If the group makes recommendations only it loses its energy, creativity and commitment.

5. Commitment to Learning

Solving an organisational problem provides immediate, short-term benefits to the organisation.

Long term strategic value includes the learning gained by group members and development of leadership skills, group learning and team work, and the application of the learning throughout the organisation.

6. Action Learning Coach

The Action Learning coach helps the team members reflect on both what they are learning and how they are solving problems.

The coach enables group members to reflect on how they listen. They then reframe the problem, and give feedback on how the team plans and works together.

The Action Learning coach also helps the team focus on what they find difficult, what processes they employ, and the implications of these processes on what they achieve. With this information, teams can grow and become more cohesive.

THE PROCESS

1. Apply

Share a broad outline of your problem/challenge.

2. Form a Group

3. Introduced to WIAL Coach

4. Action Learning Session

A maximum of four 4 hour sessions all within four months.

5. Taking Action

APPLY THROUGH

- NSD.Support@ifrc.org
- Share your Name, Position, National Society, and a short description of the problem/challenge related to Financial Sustainability, Resilience or Governance that you want to solve.
- After you apply the IFRC will liaise with WIAL to identify a coach for your NS who can guide you through the Action Learning process.
- While we look for a coach, the NS would need to identify a group of 4-8 committed people from your NS to join the group and work on the problem you have identified.