

Peer Learning Programme – The Activities in Brief

What is an Action Learning Set?

An Action Learning Set is a simple and powerful method for individuals to learn from each other - learning that can be put into practice immediately. The topics of learning are not set and are varied. They are generated by the participants.

There is a clear, tried and tested process which an independent Set Adviser will use, with their other skills, to facilitate the Action Learning Set. This enables Set members to ask searching questions and each individual in turn take their learning and use it to initiate changes trying out new and different approaches. Action Learning Sets provide:

- a safe environment to explore new ways of thinking, doing and relating
- a space for individual learning (helping others with theirs)
- a place to gain support, challenge and insight from peers
- a chance to test assumptions and learn what works
- a platform from which innovative ideas and approaches emerge

We will have several Action Learning Sets as part of the Peer Learning Programme made up of about 5-7 peers from different organisations. We are planning to have 4 meetings per Set and they will approximately be two months apart.

The participation in and experience of an Action Learning Set is a positive one.

What is a Benchmarking Club?

The purpose of a Benchmarking Club is to improve the performance of members in relation to a specific area. It could, for example, be one of the list of the defined seven broad categories of organisational development that would offer significant benefits to small and diaspora organisations:

- advocacy & influencing
- financial and operational management
- fundraising and communications
- governance and leadership
- legal affairs and human resources
- monitoring and evaluation
- organisational strategy and programme planning

Benchmarking clubs will be made up of 5-7 individuals from different organisations. Benchmarking clubs are established by groups of organisations share a common concern or interest. Benchmarking is the process whereby members measure their performance and compare it with others for the purpose of improving performance in key areas.

There will be an independent facilitator who will enable participants to:

- share and measure quantitative and qualitative performance, using agreed indicators, in a transparent manner under the assurance that information shared will be treated as confidential to club members.
- interrogate and learn from experiments and good practice.
- collaborate where appropriate

What is a toolkit?

Simply put a toolkit is comprised of a series of tools that an organisation can practically use to come up with a 'product' or result. This could, for example be, tools that will help with developing funding proposals, a strategic plan or a project plan etc. (the seven broad categories mentioned above could all have a related tool).

The tool/s is made up of a set of guidelines on steps that can be used to develop the 'product' or gain the result. In this learning context, it will also give a theoretical understanding of the topic in question and how this translates for organisations in a practical way was the tool is used for its specific purpose.

We envisage producing a maximum of five tools, their subject areas will be determined by the users of the tools. We expect that these tools will not only be used by the small and diaspora organisations for their own organisation but also by them with their partners in Africa.

These tools will be user-friendly and adaptable and they will be available as soft copies or, if needed, as printed copies. They will be available to participating organisation in the Peer Learning Programme but also more widely to other organisations.

What is a Praxis Note?

This is a usable note that will be produced following each workshop (so there will not be verbatim notes of the workshops).

Depending on the topics of discussion the learning workshops, the praxis note will essentially capture the practical experiences, lessons learnt, questions and answers that will help to develop and apply better practice. Such a praxis note provides practitioners with a nearer 'hands-on experience' and offers insights.