**Action Learning Sets**

**WHAT THEY ARE**

Action Learning Sets are a structured method enabling small groups to address complicated issues by meeting regularly and working collectively.

This tool is especially geared to learning and personal development at the professional and managerial levels.

Action learning sets are particularly appropriate for professional and managerial-level learning and personal development work. They are most often used:

- on work-based projects where action learning set members are involved and are able to influence the outcomes.
- for issues concerning how specific action learning set members operate in the work context (e.g. creating partnerships).

**THE PROCESS**

The Action Learning process is a cyclical one, giving each member the opportunity to present a problem and comment on others:

1. **Start** - Present your challenge, problem, issue or your question.
2. **Insight?** - New understanding, ideas on taking action?
3. **Mark** - Learning, draw conclusions, define learning from experience. Integrate new knowledge into your practice.
4. **Set** - Members question you constructively to challenge views and understanding, perceptions, assumptions. Others share knowledge invited by presenter of issue.
5. **Test** - Out taking action in the workspace.
6. **Bring** - Results back to set—what worked/didn’t? Why?

**BENEFITS**

Action Learning is a powerful approach for working on difficult problems in professional practice and helps set standards for good practice in organizational learning.

The following are some of its most relevant benefits:

- it offers participants an opportunity for personal development;
- it improves problem solving, as well as questioning and listening skills;
- it helps participants tackle complex tasks; and
- it allows participants to learn from other organizations facing similar challenges.

**KEY POINTS AND PRACTICAL TIPS**

- Action Learning Sets are most effective when they are voluntary.
- They should focus on real-life practice-related problems, especially those which are open-ended in nature and do not have a right or wrong answer.
- The ground rules for action learning sets should include:
  - being honest with oneself and others;
  - respecting others and their viewpoint; and
  - taking responsibility for our own actions.

**FIND OUT MORE**

- CECLAC - Collecting and Exchange of Local Agriculture Content. [www.celac.or.ug](http://www.celac.or.ug)
- BOND Action Learning Programme, focuses on UK NGOs - Networking for International Development. [www.bond.org.uk/lte/alsets.htm#aboutal](http://www.bond.org.uk/lte/alsets.htm#aboutal)

**ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

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