



*Interfaith Leaders for Social Action (ILSA) Programme
An IFYC Initiative in India
2011 - 2013
Frequently Asked Questions for Interfaith Leader Applicants*

OVERVIEW

What is the Interfaith Leaders for Social Action Programme (ILSA) in India?

ILSA aims to mobilize interfaith action by making an impact on social issues through the work of outstanding young interfaith leaders and NGOs. ILSA, which will be implemented in Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai, has two goals:

1. To recruit and train 50 outstanding young leaders from different religious and philosophical backgrounds – called *Interfaith Leaders* – who will implement social action projects by mobilizing a diverse cross-section of their communities.
2. To create a cadre of NGOs dedicated to promoting interfaith cooperation by establishing interfaith hubs in the four cities.

What is Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)?

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) is a U.S. based non-profit that seeks to make interfaith cooperation a social norm. IFYC builds mutual respect and pluralism among young people from different religious traditions by empowering them to work together to serve others. Since 2002, IFYC has worked on five continents and with over 300 college and university campuses, training thousands in the principles of interfaith leadership, and reaching millions through the media. Learn more about IFYC at www.ifyc.org

What does IFYC mean by interfaith cooperation?

Interfaith

IFYC defines interfaith as the engagement of people from diverse traditions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Secular Humanism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Baha'i, atheist, agnostic, and all other religious, non-religious, and philosophical traditions. Alternative words like "multi-faith," "inter-religious" or "multi-religious" can be used interchangeably to articulate the same idea.

Interfaith Cooperation (Religious Pluralism)

In a world of interfaith cooperation, religiously diverse people can live together in equal dignity and mutual loyalty, inspired by their various traditions to work together for the common good. The long-term mission of IFYC is to make interfaith cooperation the norm, rather than the exception, for how people of different faiths interact.

Drawing from Harvard University scholar Diana Eck, IFYC articulates interfaith cooperation as the active engagement of religious diversity to a constructive end. Interfaith cooperation, which is interchangeable with “religious pluralism,” has three essential components:

- *Respect for individual religious or non-religious identity,*

Respect for identity means that everyone can bring their full identity to the table. There’s space for people to believe that they are right and others are wrong, and that their beliefs are true and others’ are not. Interfaith cooperation is not syncretistic or relativistic; no one has to concede exclusive truth claims to be part of it.

- *Mutually inspiring relationships, and*

Interfaith cooperation builds relationships that move towards authentic friendships, even as space emerges for real conversations about disagreements and difference, with a sense that each person gains from the relationship.

- *Common action for the common good.*

Dialogue is important, but research shows that common action builds stronger communities. This is where interfaith cooperation has the potential to both create tolerant individuals and transform communal relations in a diverse society.

What does IFYC mean by interfaith social action?

IFYC defines interfaith social action as taking positive action toward a social issue that connects to people’s deepest religious and philosophical beliefs by demonstrating the power of interfaith cooperation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who is eligible to be an Interfaith Leader?

To be eligible, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- a. Be a citizen of India,
- b. Be between the ages of 18 – 30 years,
- c. Have successfully completed Standard XII or equivalent. (Preference will be given to candidates who are in college or have completed their undergraduate (bachelors) degree),
- d. Be bilingual in English and Hindi or another regional language preferred,
- e. Be committed to interfaith cooperation, service-learning, and the mission of IFYC,
- f. Have demonstrated leadership experience through participation in extracurricular activities in school/college,
- g. Have strong writing skills in English and Hindi or another regional language,



- h. Have demonstrated prior experience in public speaking, advocacy, or crisis response.
- i. Have strong work ethic, problem solving and time management skills, and
- j. Have prior experience in leading or participating in a social action project and event planning preferred.

How can applicants apply for the Interfaith Leader positions?

Applications are completed and submitted online. To apply, applicants are required to register by providing their email address and a password. This will allow them to begin the application and return at a later time to complete and submit it.

When are the applications for the Interfaith Leader positions due?

Applications need to be submitted on or before Sunday, October 2, 2011. Only completed applications from eligible candidates will be considered for the programme. Nomination letters are to be submitted by Sunday, October 2, 2011 as well.

What information does the applicant need to provide on the application?

The application asks applicants to provide information about their background and past experiences (including educational history, employment history, involvement in volunteer or service initiatives, leadership history, publications and presentations) and compose a number of short essays. Applicants must also provide contact information for two (2) individuals who will complete nomination forms on their behalf, one of which should be completed by a representative of the NGO where the applicant wishes to work during the ILSA programme year. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the selection committee.

When will I hear from the Selection Committee about my application?

The deadline to submit applications is October 2, 2011. You will automatically receive an email when you submit your application informing you that your application has been received. The selection committee will review complete applications in October, and begin to contact applicants about the status of their candidacy by early November.

Will I be interviewed for the position?

The selection committee will select a number of applicants to advance to the second round of selection. During this round, candidates will be interviewed via telephone. Following all phone interviews, a final list of candidates will be chosen.

If an applicant does not follow a particular religion, can he/she still apply?

The position is open to anyone motivated to advance interfaith cooperation through interfaith social action. All young people of faith and no faith that meet the eligibility criteria are invited to apply for the position.



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

In which city will the Interfaith Leaders work?

Interfaith Leaders will work with a partner NGO in their city of residence, i.e. Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, or Mumbai. Applicants must be a resident in one of the above cities to be eligible for the position.

How long is the commitment for the Interfaith Leaders?

Interfaith Leaders will serve a total of 12 months, beginning in December 2011, and ending in December 2012. This includes a weekend residential training in Delhi from December 8-11, 2011. Interfaith Leaders work on the ground in their cities for 12 months, from January 1st, 2012, until the end of their programme year on December 31st 2012. Alumni of the programme will have many opportunities available to them as part of the alumni programme after the end of the programme year including immediate opportunities to participate in speaking opportunities at the South Asia Regional Conference on Interfaith Cooperation in 2013.

Is this a paid opportunity?

Interfaith Leaders are paid a small stipend for their work.

How much are the Interfaith Leaders paid?

Interfaith Leaders are paid \$200 (~₹9,000) for their work over the course of the programme.

Will IFYC cover the cost of Interfaith Leaders' travel, food, and lodging for the December training?

If accepted into the programme, all costs associated with Interfaith Leaders' involvement in the weekend training in December 2011, including travel, food, and lodging will be covered by IFYC.

How are Interfaith Leaders' placements decided?

Interfaith Leaders will work with NGOs in their home cities. We anticipate most of the Interfaith Leader applicants to be current interns or volunteers at NGOs they will be working with. However, in cases where applicants are not currently interning or volunteering at a NGO through which they will participate in ILSA, they should get a NGO to nominate them for the programme. There will be a section in the application to provide information regarding your nominating NGO.

How many Interfaith Leaders will you be working with?

Day to day, you will be working closely with one other Interfaith Leader, your site partner. Your work as a pair contributes to and depends upon the work of all 50 Interfaith



Leaders. The group as a whole will pursue common objectives and serve as a source of support and advice for one another.

What kind of work do the Interfaith Leaders do?

Interfaith Leaders will work to increase interfaith social action in their cities and achieve interfaith cooperation by advancing the goals of their partner NGO. Interfaith Leader's particular project is determined based on the work plan devised by the partner NGO and IFYC programme staff. Typical projects may include implementing fundraising initiatives, running advocacy campaigns, or coordinating interfaith service initiatives in their cities. In addition, a proportion of the Interfaith Leader's time each month will be devoted to interfaith leadership coaching sessions and participation in ILSA webinars.

What will be the role of an Interfaith Leader?

- a. Attend the Interfaith Leadership Training in Delhi from 8-11, December 2011.
- b. Work in pairs to implement an interfaith social action project related to the mission of their host NGO by mobilizing a wide cross-section of their community.
- c. Collaborate with host NGO to strategize innovative ways to incorporate interfaith cooperation within the existing framework and structures of the organization.
- d. Speak out about their work through blogs, opinion articles, and social media.
- e. Assist their host NGO in establishing interfaith hubs in their city.

How will Interfaith Leaders make a difference?

Interfaith Leaders will increase the number and quality of interfaith partnership in their city through their social action projects. Through their work with faith and secular communities, Interfaith Leaders will help to advance interfaith cooperation and take steps to combat their social issue.

What kind of training do the Interfaith Leaders receive?

Interfaith Leaders complete a rigorous, weekend-long training and orientation programme in Delhi, consisting of coursework in interfaith leadership, community organizing, and skills such as event planning, fundraising, marketing, and communications. Then, during the programme year, Interfaith Leaders undergo an ongoing interfaith leadership and personal development coaching curriculum and receive one-on-one interfaith mentoring. This coaching will bolster the Interfaith Leaders' capacity for interfaith outreach and mobilization and support Interfaith Leaders in their personal interfaith leadership development.



What will the Interfaith Leaders do between December 12 and December 31, 2011 at our organization?

Interfaith Leaders will spend the time between December 12 – December 31, 2011 developing a strategy to implement their social action projects in collaboration with their supervisor at the partner NGO and IFYC programme staff.

In that time period, Interfaith Leaders will receive the training (detailed in the previous question). In addition, partner NGOs will provide training on their particular social-issue focus, project, and/or on any special content Interfaith Leaders will need to perform their work. For example, Interfaith Leaders will receive general training on implementing a social action project from the programme, but organizations working specifically on child health will need to provide enough in-depth training about that particular topic as necessary to complete projects.

FUNDING

Who funds social action projects?

IFYC will give \$1,600 (~₹ 72,000) toward the implementation of the social action projects by the interfaith leaders in collaboration with respective partner NGOs. These funds are paid directly to the partner NGO. In turn, the partner NGOs will disseminate these funds to the interfaith leaders and keep track of all expenditures.

How are the expenses of Interfaith Leaders' day-to-day work funded?

Routine work-related expenses and supplies are provided by the partner NGO, just as those supplies would be provided to any other intern/volunteer.

PROGRAMME SUPPORT

How are Interfaith Leaders supported by partner NGOs?

Partner NGOs will designate a staff supervisor who is responsible for guiding Interfaith Leader's day-to-day work, progress toward their project goals, and professional development. Partner NGOs will also provide Interfaith Leaders with additional training on their particular social issue, projects, and/or on any special content Interfaith Leaders will need to perform their work.

How else will IFYC provide support?

IFYC will provide media support for Interfaith Leaders, opportunities to be involved in global IFYC initiatives, and will also connect Interfaith Leaders to one another so that they can share expertise and support each other in their work across the programme.

What will Interfaith Leaders get out of participating in ILSA?

As an Interfaith Leader, you will meet and develop strong relationships with young people from around the country and around the world. You will learn about social issues and the interfaith movement. You will gain on-the-job experience and interfaith organizing skills working in a leading Indian NGO. You will gain access to networks of



other young interfaith leaders and opportunities open only to programme alumni. You will make a difference in your community, your city, your country, and in the world.

What kind of opportunities will Interfaith Leaders have as an alumnus/a of ILSA?

ILSA alumni are part of the larger pool of IFYC alumni; an elite network of young interfaith leaders. Alumni have access to international speaking engagements, invitations to conferences, select job listings, and many other special opportunities. Alumni also have the opportunity to advise programme staff on matters of programme design and selection of future Fellows.

KEY DATES

<i>SEPTEMBER 13, 2011</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders Recruitment Begins
<i>SEPTEMBER 26, 2011</i>	▪ Webinar for potential Interfaith Leader applicants and partner NGOs on ILSA and the application process
<i>OCTOBER 2, 2011</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders application materials due
<i>OCT 2011</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders selection process
<i>EARLY NOV 2011</i>	▪ Notifications sent to Interfaith Leader applicants
<i>DECEMBER 8 - 11, 2011</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders convene in Delhi for an intensive training on IFYC's framework and methodology
<i>DEC 12 - JAN 31, 2011</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders finalize their social action strategy and work plan in collaboration with their IFYC mentors
<i>JAN 1, 2012</i>	▪ Launch of Social Action Projects
<i>JULY, 2012</i>	▪ National partner NGOs & Interfaith Leaders organize one-day city-wide seminars
<i>NOVEMBER 2012</i>	▪ IFYC organizes a nationwide speaking tour in all four cities
<i>DECEMBER 31, 2012</i>	▪ Social Action Projects End
<i>JAN- NOV 2013</i>	▪ Interfaith Leaders and National Partner NGOs participate in programme evaluation
<i>JULY 2013</i>	▪ National Partner NGOs & Interfaith Leader alumni lead workshops on interfaith cooperation in their cities
<i>NOVEMBER 2013</i>	▪ Attend regional conference on interfaith cooperation

MORE QUESTIONS?

We invite you to contact us for more information about partnering with IFYC on ILSA in India. For more information, please contact us at ILSA@ifyc.org

