



*Interfaith Leaders for Social Action (ILSA) Programme  
An IFYC Initiative in India  
2011 – 2013*

*Frequently Asked Questions for Partner NGO Applicants*

*This document answers our most frequently asked questions about participating in the Interfaith Leaders for Social Action (ILSA) program. You will find answers to questions about: program structure, funding, Interfaith Leaders' training and support structure, and partner non-governmental organizations (NGO) selection. If you have further questions, our contact information is listed at the end of this document and we will be glad to answer specific questions related to your organization.*

## 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](http://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 a partner NGO?

In order to be eligible as a partner, a NGO must meet the following requirements:

- a. Registered and in operation in India for at least three years,
- b. Located in Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, or Mumbai,
- c. Have a minimum of two full-time staff employed on-site,
- d. Demonstrated prior experience in managing grants, preferably from foreign organizations,



- e. Demonstrated prior experience in working on collaborative projects with other Indian NGOs,
- f. Show interest in enhancing and promoting interfaith outreach efforts and approaches,
- g. Able to present financial audits, if necessary, from the last three years, and
- h. Preferably have Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (<http://www.fcraforngos.org/intro.htm>).

How can applicants apply to be a partner NGO?

Partner NGOs interested in participating in ILSA can nominate Interfaith Leader candidates who should complete an application online. To apply, Interfaith Leader 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 is the application for the Interfaith Leader position 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 from partner NGOs are to be submitted by Sunday, October 2, 2011 as well.

What information do partner NGO applicants need to provide in the nomination letter?

The nomination letter asks partner NGO candidates to provide information about their organizational background, past and current projects, and to provide reference for the Interfaith Leader applicant they are nominating. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the selection committee.

When will the partner NGO applicants hear from the selection committee?

The deadline to submit applications and nomination letters is October 2, 2011. Interfaith Leader applicants will automatically receive an email when they submit their application informing them that their 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 the partner NGO applicants be interviewed?

The selection committee will reach out to applicants if they need to seek further clarifications on the NGO's candidacy.

Do partner NGO applicants need to have prior experience in working on interfaith/interreligious/communal harmony issues?

No, partner NGO applicants do not have to have prior experience in working on interfaith/interreligious/communal harmony issues. However, a background with this type



of work is a positive attribute. We are looking to partner with any NGO that is motivated to advance its mission and interfaith cooperation through interfaith social action.

### Can partner NGO applicants select their own Interfaith Leaders?

IFYC programme staff will select, pair, and place Interfaith Leaders at each partner NGO. Interfaith Leaders will ideally be current or new interns/volunteers at partner NGOs who will work to implement the social action project on a part-time basis. At the time of applying to the programme, partner NGOs will be able to nominate names of prospective Interfaith Leaders. The selection committee will consider these nominations closely while making the final decisions.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

### What will be the role of a partner NGO?

- a. Offer at least two well-defined *Interfaith Leader* positions to current/future volunteers or interns with significant responsibilities and measurable objectives for *Interfaith Leaders* that can be achieved through working 12-20 hours per week for 12 months.
- b. Draft and implement work plans in collaboration with IFYC that task *Interfaith Leaders* with mobilizing interfaith action on a social issue related to the mission of the NGO. (Information will follow regarding work plans).
- c. Provide direct supervision, support, and reporting on objectives for at least two *Interfaith Leaders*, in line with programme requirements (Details to follow).
- d. Provide workspace, employment infrastructure, and the capacity to incorporate *Interfaith Leaders'* work within the organization.
- e. Provide bi-annual reports to IFYC on the management of the NGO's grant and the *Interfaith Leaders'* work.
- f. Contribute to the programme's blog and seek opportunities to publish opinion editorials about the programme in national and vernacular press in India.
- g. Attend a bi-monthly convening of all the *Interfaith Leaders* within their city convened by IFYC's National Partner NGO.
- h. Attend IFYC's citywide seminars in July, 2012.
- i. Attend IFYC's South Asia Regional Conference in 2013.

### In which city will the social action projects be implemented by the Interfaith Leaders?

Interfaith Leaders will work with a partner NGO in their city of residence (i.e., Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, or Mumbai) to implement in the social action projects.

### How long is the commitment for partner NGOs?

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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, until the end of their programme year on December 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

What are the Interfaith Leaders' qualifications and training?

Interfaith Leaders are young leaders chosen from a highly competitive pool of applicants based on their skills, experience, and leadership potential. All Interfaith Leaders complete a rigorous weekend-long training and orientation programme consisting of coursework on interfaith leadership, service learning, and skills, such as event planning, fundraising, marketing, and communications. Expert mentors at IFYC will coach the Interfaith Leaders throughout the year and connect them to one another so that they are able to share expertise.

How many Interfaith Leaders will be working at each partner NGO?

Each partner NGO will make available two well-defined Interfaith Leader positions at their organization. However, Partner NGOs can also choose to host more than one-pair of Interfaith Leaders. The funds allocated to the partner NGO will be based on the number of pairs of Interfaith Leaders they host.

What will Interfaith Leaders prioritize – interfaith action or progress on our organization's social action issue?

Interfaith Leaders' success in the programme will depend on their ability both to advance interfaith action and also to make clear progress on the partner NGO's goals. They are asked to approach these two goals as mutually reinforcing (interfaith action should result in progress on the social action issue and vice versa). Supervisors at partner NGOs in collaboration with IFYC mentors will play a critical role in ensuring that both goals are pursued with equal vigour and concurrently. For example, events should be interfaith and social action focused wherever possible.

At our organization, things sometimes change quickly. What if we'd like to make changes to the work plan of the Interfaith Leaders in advance of their start or at some point during their time with us?

Any proposed changes to Interfaith Leaders'-approved work plan or supervision must be discussed with and approved by the IFYC programme staff before any major changes are made.

How will Interfaith Leaders' make a difference? How will we measure their achievements?

ILSA will establish metrics common to all Interfaith Leaders that will show progress toward their overall programme goals. The partner NGO supervisor and the Interfaith Leaders, in consultation with IFYC programme staff, will decide upon appropriate impact measures at the start of the Interfaith Leaders' work. Supervisors will then submit short quarterly assessments to IFYC programme staff to show progress against both high-level and project-level goals.



## What are Interfaith Leaders called?

Interfaith Leaders are identified as IFYC Interfaith Leaders placed at (or working with) the partner NGO. For example, "[Name of the Interfaith Leader] is an IFYC Interfaith Leader at [Name of the NGO]".

## How will the Interfaith Leaders' work be branded?

Whenever possible, work in which the Interfaith Leaders are involved should be co-branded as a joint NGO and ILSA effort. Co-branding is required where events, initiatives, or projects are spearheaded or run specifically by the Interfaith Leaders as distinct activities (that may yet be part of a larger partner NGO campaign or programme). The specifics of co-branding requirements will be determined in the contract agreed upon between IFYC and the partner NGO.

## Can Interfaith Leaders do advocacy work?

ILSA is about demonstrating how faith and secular communities can come together to help achieve different social issues. As such, ILSA gives priority to work plans that centre on the mobilization of joint action by people of faith and philosophical backgrounds. Ideally, this activity creates opportunities for participants to develop meaningful relationships and to show (rather than simply tell) others – whether fellow community members or politicians – that they are willing to take action in order to make a difference. This means that some forms of advocacy may fit well within the scope of the programme, and others will not. For example, an advocacy campaign that centres on local faith and secular communities co-hosting interfaith dinners to which their local political representatives are invited and at which attendees make the case for increased funding for a particular social issue would align nicely with the programme's goals. On the other hand, a campaign that consists mostly of petition signing or letter writing would likely not.

## 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.

Will there be any additional funding available for NGOs?

IFYC will not provide any additional funding to the NGOs.

What employment benefits must the NGOs provide for Interfaith Leaders?

IFYC grants will not cover any employment benefits for the Interfaith Leaders.

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

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

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

What is expected of the Interfaith Leaders' supervisor?

The partner NGO supervisor plays a critical role in the programme. This person is the Interfaith Leaders' direct manager and supervises them in the same way that s/he would supervise any other employee. The supervisor must support the goals of the programme, be regularly and personally available to the Interfaith Leaders, and support Interfaith Leaders in their professional development. As part of this, the partner NGO supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring Interfaith Leaders are welcomed and integrated into the organization (as applicable),
- Working with Interfaith Leaders to set project goals,
- Working with Interfaith Leaders to craft and implement a strategy for reaching project goals,
- Tracking Interfaith Leaders' progress toward their high-level and project goals,
- Meeting regularly with Interfaith Leaders, both individually and as a pair to review work plan progress, and provide guidance, direction, and feedback on their work,
- Being available to Interfaith Leaders for day-to-day questions and support,
- Ensuring that Interfaith Leaders are provided with training and/or other opportunities to gain sufficient understanding of the social issue that is their focus,



- Completing a short periodic assessment of: the Interfaith Leaders' progress, ILSA (including key success and challenges at both levels), and financial management of the grant.
- Conducting a mid- and end-programme review for each Interfaith Leader.
- Liaising and coordinating with Interfaith Leaders' IFYC mentor regarding Interfaith Leaders' performance and development.
- Liaising and coordinating with IFYC staff, especially regarding communications and media, and
- Attending an initial orientation meeting for partner NGO supervisors in December 2011(details to follow).

How is the role of the supervisor at the partner NGO different from that of the IFYC mentor?

As explained above, the NGO supervisor is responsible for guiding Interfaith Leaders' day-to-day work, progress toward their project goals, and professional development. The IFYC mentor communicates with Interfaith Leaders in order to provide regular interfaith coaching. This coaching is meant to: bolster Interfaith Leaders' capacity for interfaith outreach and mobilization, and support Interfaith Leaders in their personal interfaith leadership development. The mentor is also available to Interfaith Leaders for general mentoring support.

Who determines Interfaith Leaders' goals, work plan, and day-to-day activity?

Interfaith Leaders' high-level goals are set by the programme. As currently envisioned, these goals are to:

1. Increase the frequency and quality of faith and secular communities' joint action, with a particular focus on sparking new interfaith relationships.
2. Make quantifiable progress on the social issue within their NGO by implementing the social action project.

In order to track progress toward these goals, IFYC programme staff will define a few key and uniform metrics that all Interfaith Leaders will be required to report against, such that programme-wide impact is clearly discernable.

Partner NGOs will submit a proposed Interfaith Leaders' work plan as part of the selection process. This work plan will encompass Interfaith Leaders' project goals. Project and high-level goals will be determined through a collaborative process between the Interfaith Leaders, the supervisor, and staff at IFYC (these are compatible with, but more specific than high-level goals). Day to day, the supervisor at partner NGOs is responsible for guiding and supporting Interfaith Leaders' activity. The supervisor and IFYC programme staff will be in contact regularly to ensure that Interfaith Leaders' work is on track to achieve their goals.

A proportion of the Interfaith Leaders' time (an average of 4 to 8 hours per week) must be built into Interfaith Leaders' work plans to allow time for their interfaith leadership coaching sessions and participation in global initiatives and events run by IFYC (as they arise).



How will partner NGOs be connected to one another?

Partner NGOs will participate in an initial orientation in December 2011 where they will have an opportunity to learn more about each other's work. To network with one another, share best practices and challenges, and discuss Interfaith Leaders' work, partner NGOs will also be invited to participate in regular conference calls.

What will a partner NGO gain from participating in ILSA?

- a. Build partnerships with diverse faith and secular communities.
- b. Strengthen a project with the help of at least two *Interfaith Leaders* who will work for 14 months on it through IFYC's programme.
- c. Support the national partner NGO's internal commitment to diversity in the faith/religion sector.
- d. Cultivate and connect to new young leaders.
- e. Through the international IFYC network, engage with other organizations and leaders around the world who are committed to interfaith action.
- f. Raise the national and international profile of its work through extensive media and communications support from IFYC.
- g. Build new partnerships with NGOs working on the programme across India

#### KEY DATES

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

