

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Since taking Action Learning training in December 2016 I have used it on several occasions in North Africa and the Middle East. I lead a program for emerging leaders and we used Action Learning as a key component. We divided the current group into 3 teams, each working on a situation that needed to be improved or an area of opportunity. The teams worked together for about 6 months and were formed to have variety of nationalities and for each person to be with others they don't normally work with.



I enjoyed watching them work at using the leadership characteristics they chose. In the team I coached, one guy stood out. One day he chose “encouraging” and he encouraged all the team members on specific things they did throughout the meeting. He then applied this idea at a training conference he helped lead. He asked all the group leaders to have each one in their group pick a characteristic to work on during their discussions. In addition to their meetings together we asked team members to interview others who could help them understanding the “problem” better, tell what they did in their situation or give ideas for steps to take. Here they needed to practice asking good questions and listening well.



I’m sure you’ve seen that not everyone is as excited about Action Learning as we are. At the end of one session I facilitated with another group a couple of people said they didn’t like it. Why? Because they had to stay on topic with the presented problem and the question that was asked. Others in the same group liked it because it kept the discussion on topic and came to practical ideas quickly. In this Action Learning session

one person presented the “problem” and he thought he would be the only one to have action steps to take. By the time the discussion ended several others realized they also had steps to take to move forward in this “problem”.

With another group that works with staff development we had a group problem – how to improve involvement in an annual development cycle for all of the staff. Everyone was encouraged because they had practical steps that would greatly improve the effectiveness in their country.

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