Agents of Change

Introductory Guide

ANGLICAN ALLIANCE

Development · Relief · Advocacy

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE?

Please read this guide carefully before starting the course. It contains essential information for your studies.

In this getting started guide you will find...

- Welcome and words of support from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Alliance team.
- An introduction to Agents of Change: a brief overview of what it is and what it involves.
- More detailed information about how the course works and what it involves in a "Frequently Asked Questions" section.

WELCOME FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The Agents of Change programme is one of the most exciting innovations from the Anglican Alliance. The modules focus on vital areas of community development, grounded in academic rigour. It is a superb contribution from the Anglican Alliance to strengthen the committed and inspiring work of Anglicans around the world in holistic mission. I hear that participants talk of being themselves transformed as they seek to transform their communities, working together with the poorest and most vulnerable. Through the connections of students with their mentors, bonds of fellowship are developing across the Anglican Communion. Together people are discovering a shared vision and mutual inspiration in responding to God's call to build his Kingdom in the here and now.

I wish the Agents of Change students every success in their studies. I encourage people from all parts of the Anglican Communion to get engaged as students and as mentors, connecting through the Anglican Alliance. I pray that together we can, in Christ, become agents of the change God longs to see in the world.

† Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury
October 2013

GREETINGS FROM THE ANGLICAN ALLIANCE TEAM

Welcome from the Anglican Alliance team to the "Agents of Change" distance-learning programme. We're here to support you to make your learning as effective as possible and strengthen your role in transforming your communities.

Grounded in our Christian faith, the Anglican Alliance brings together development, relief and advocacy across the Anglican Communion. Our mandate is to support your work, and these modules are a key part of that task.

Now it's over to you! The Anglican Alliance team includes facilitators in different parts of the world to provide regional support and advice. We welcome your feedback, and will celebrate your success. But only you, through your studies, can realise the potential of these modules to empower Anglicans to be agents of change.

And a special welcome from Elizabeth Perry, the Agents of Change course co-ordinator:

I will be your first point of contact for the Agents of Change programme. I am delighted that you are setting out on this exciting journey and wish you every success. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me (agentsofchange@anglicancommunion.org) if you are unclear about anything – I'm here to help!

The Anglican Alliance team

From left to right: Dr Elizabeth Perry, Agents of Change course co-ordinator; The Revd Rachel Carnegie, Co-executive Director; Paulo Ueti, Facilitator for Latin America; Dr Janice Proud, Relief and Programmes Manager; Clifton Dillon Nedd, Facilitator for the Caribbean; Tagolyn Kabekabe, Facilitator for the Pacific; June Nderitu, Facilitator for Africa; The Revd Andy Bowerman – Co-executive Director; Annam (Annamaney) Arumanayagam, Facilitator for East Asia; Christina Manning, Communications; Isobel Owen, Programme Manager.

Please visit the website to find out more about the Anglican Alliance: https://www.anglicanalliance.org

INTRODUCING AGENTS OF CHANGE – A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Anglican Alliance

The Anglican Alliance brings together those in the Anglican family of churches and agencies to work for a world free of poverty and injustice, to be a voice for the voiceless, to reconcile those in conflict, and to safeguard the earth. The Alliance is grounded in the Church's mission to challenge and change the unjust structures of the world and belongs to everyone in the worldwide Anglican family.

The vision for The Anglican Alliance began to take shape at the 2008 Lambeth Conference with a recommendation to establish a new way for Anglicans to work together globally for development, relief, and advocacy. This recommendation reflected the urgency that bishops attached to combating the scandal of poverty and their recognition that the effective way of doing so required concerted and coordinated Communion action.

What Is Agents Of Change?

Agents of Change is a programme of the Anglican Alliance to help Anglicans anywhere in the world tackle poverty and bring about transformation in their local communities.

The course equips participants with the skills and knowledge needed to set up a development project in their local community. It looks at every stage of the process - from coming up with an idea... to planning... to managing a project... to monitoring it and evaluating it. The course teaches both practical skills (such as how to write a budget and how to do a risk assessment) and values (such as being inclusive and being transparent).

Agents of Change is a distance-learning course. There are 8 modules, which participants study at their own pace with the support of an overseas mentor. At the end of each module, participants send their work to their mentor for comment and feedback. On successful completion of the course, participants are awarded a certificate in recognition of their work and achievement, but more importantly, they are equipped to become Agents of Change in their communities.

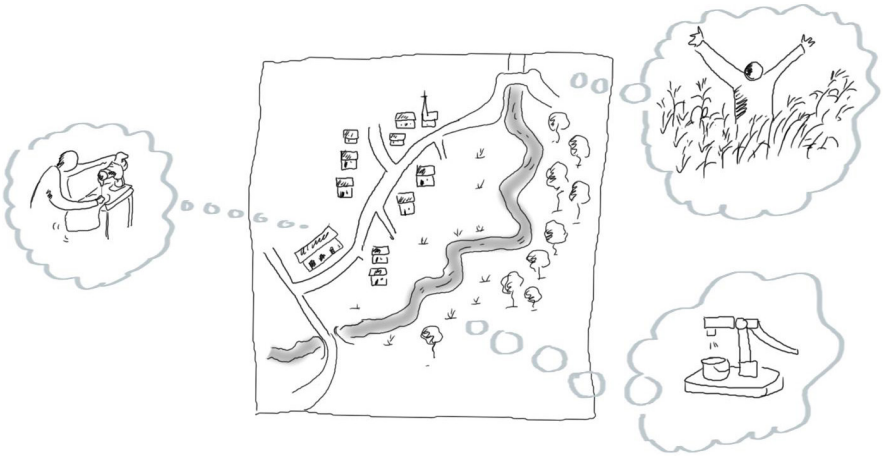
The Agents of Change programme was originally written by the Open University in the UK for the Anglican Alliance. This is the second edition of the programme. Most of the core material from the first edition is in this second edition, but we have added to it and made changes in the light of feedback and experience of the first version. We have added a new module (Dreaming Dreams), a Bible study for each module, more case studies and worked examples, and a quiz at the end of each module. The course is now illustrated throughout with beautiful line drawings by Bill Crooks of Mosaic Creative. In addition, the course has been designed as a print resource, so can be studied in hard copy, and the programme is now open to individuals, not just groups.

Teaching Best Practice

The course modules have been developed to ensure that local community-based programmes provided as part of the Church's mission are designed and delivered in accordance with best development practice, as currently understood. They are all important. The topics covered by the modules have been chosen because experience shows that when projects fail, it is usually because one or more of these areas was not adequately thought about.

✦ Planning A Project

As you go through the course you will plan a project for your community. It can be anything you choose. For example, you might want to plan a literacy class, or a nursery, a savings and loans association or a community health project. You might already have an idea for the community project you want to work on. If this is the case, the first module will help you test your idea. But you might not yet have a project idea. Don't worry – that's fine! The first module will help you to come up with one.



As you work through the course modules you will develop your initial idea into a fully thought-out plan. The main purpose of having your own project to work on is to focus your learning and bring it to life. However, at the end of the course, you will have a blueprint for your project – a plan that you might feel God is calling you to put into action.

✦ What Do We Mean By A "Development Project"?

When we talk about a development project we simply mean setting up an activity that benefits the whole community, makes life better for people, tackles poverty, transforms lives, demonstrates creation care, empowers people or in some other way expresses God's love and reflects Jesus' words, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Examples of development projects worked on to date by Agents of Change participants include: a piggery project to generate income for a rural community with high unemployment, a motorbike ambulance project to help people in remote rural areas access health centres, a school leavers' club to help young people move on to employment, a community beautification scheme, a vegetable garden to provide food and income for a women's refuge and a tree nursery to help address problems of deforestation.

✦ An "Assets-Based" Approach

Agents of Change takes an assets-based approach and is designed to be compatible with other assets-based community development approaches such as Umoja or CCM (Church and Community Mobilisation).

What does "assets-based" mean? Traditional approaches to development have often focused on a "problem", "need" or "challenge" that a "project" is set up to correct. Often, the "need" is identified by someone from outside of the community and, usually, the project depends on outside ("donor") funding. This can be very disempowering for the community, even if they benefit from the project itself. This is because such a needs-based approach focuses only on what the community DOES NOT have, rather than balancing this with looking at what the community DOES have – and using it. Increasingly, the Church is moving towards "Assets-Based Community Development" (ABCD).

This is where communities are the agents of their own change. Together, communities look at both their challenges and their assets (capabilities, resources, skills and experience). Together, communities decide on their priorities for change, come up with project ideas and plans and put them into practice using the community's assets – often without outside help or funding. This assets-based approach is far more empowering and sustainable.

✦ What Do Participants Say About Agents Of Change?

"It's a tool to get the right knowledge at the right level and on the right focus area into a community, to help change take place in people's livelihoods."
Dennis Kabekabe, Solomon Islands.

"Agents of Change made me realise that the passion I had to save the community can come true. ... Thank you very much for this opportunity to study Agents of Change. This is a very good programme, which can change the way we manage projects in the Church as well as in the communities."
Isaac Ndhlovu, Zambia.

"I have always wanted to be an Agent of Change but never knew how!! This course is important to me because it has equipped me with skills necessary to undertake a project in my community that can change lives. This world is full of disappointments, persons are crying out that the church is not playing its role and if I can be the change I want to see and save lives through the Holy Spirit what better reward can there be? This course has given [me] the motivation and resilience to make change."
Gabriela Kydd, St Vincent, Windward Islands.

IN MORE DETAIL: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section contains more detailed information about different aspects of the course. Hopefully it will answer any questions you might have, but if not please e-mail the course coordinator, Elizabeth Perry: agentsofchange@anglicancommunion.org

✦ Contents

Below you will find answers to the following questions:

- What will I learn? ... Pages 9 - 11
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✦ What Will I Learn?

The Agents of Change programme has been developed to teach best practice in how to set up a community-based project. The 8 modules cover everything from thinking about your community's assets and needs and coming up with an idea for a project, to developing an action plan, working out what resources you will need, writing a budget, creating a project group, keeping people safe, monitoring finances, looking after volunteers... there's a lot of content!
This is how it breaks down across the 8 modules:

Module 1: Dreaming dreams

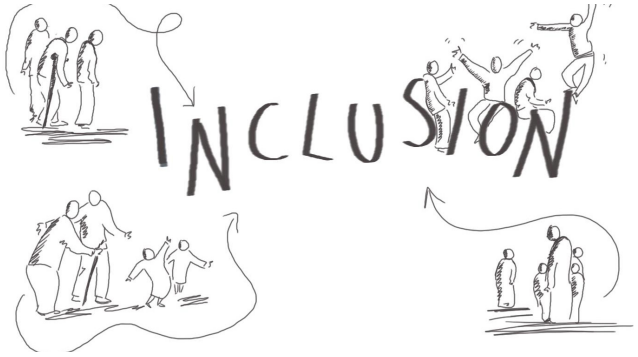
- Thinking about community
- Serving the wider community: the Anglican 5 Marks of Mission
- Looking at your community in more depth: community mapping, assets and challenges
- Identifying your community's assets
- Looking at problems and solutions. Problem and solution (action) trees
- Dreaming dreams
- Coming up with a project idea

Module 2: Consultation

- What is consultation?
- Why is consultation so important?
- Who should be consulted?
- What is good consultation? What is bad consultation?
- How should a consultation be carried out and what do you do with the results of consultation?

Module 3: Planning

- Defining your project
- Deciding on the limits (scope) of what your project might achieve
- SMART objectives
- Making an action plan
- Working out what resources you will need
- Estimating costs
- Preparing a budget



Module 4: Inclusion

- What do we mean by inclusion and exclusion?
- Why is inclusion important?
- Why are certain people often excluded?
- What does exclusion look like?
- Commonly excluded groups.
- Who is excluded in your community?
- How to be sure you know who is in your community – planning a community census
- How to include everyone: participation – participation techniques

Module 5: Protection

Looks at protection under three headings:

1. Protection of vulnerable groups in the community;
2. Protection of volunteers and staff;
3. Protection of the project itself.

- What do we mean by "vulnerability" or "at risk"?
- Hazards and threats
- The factors that increase or decrease people's vulnerability to hazards and threats
- Could your project unintentionally harm vulnerable groups in your community?
- Protecting the people who use your project from harm ("safeguarding")
- Protecting your staff and volunteers from harm
- Risks assessments

Module 6: Governance

- What do we mean by "governance"?
- What is good governance? Why does it matter?
- What does bad governance look like?
- Applying the principles of good governance: involving stakeholders (includes a stakeholder analysis); being aware of power and using it well.
- Putting theory into practice: planning a governance system for your project (the project group).

Module 7: Finance

- Financial accountability: Identifying key stakeholders to whom you are accountable financially. Accountability to the community and other donors
- Patronage and power
- Practical tools for record keeping and monitoring: money in and money out; comparing expenditure against the budget
- Finding resources and funds for your project: Looking to your own resources; External funding: dangers and practicalities

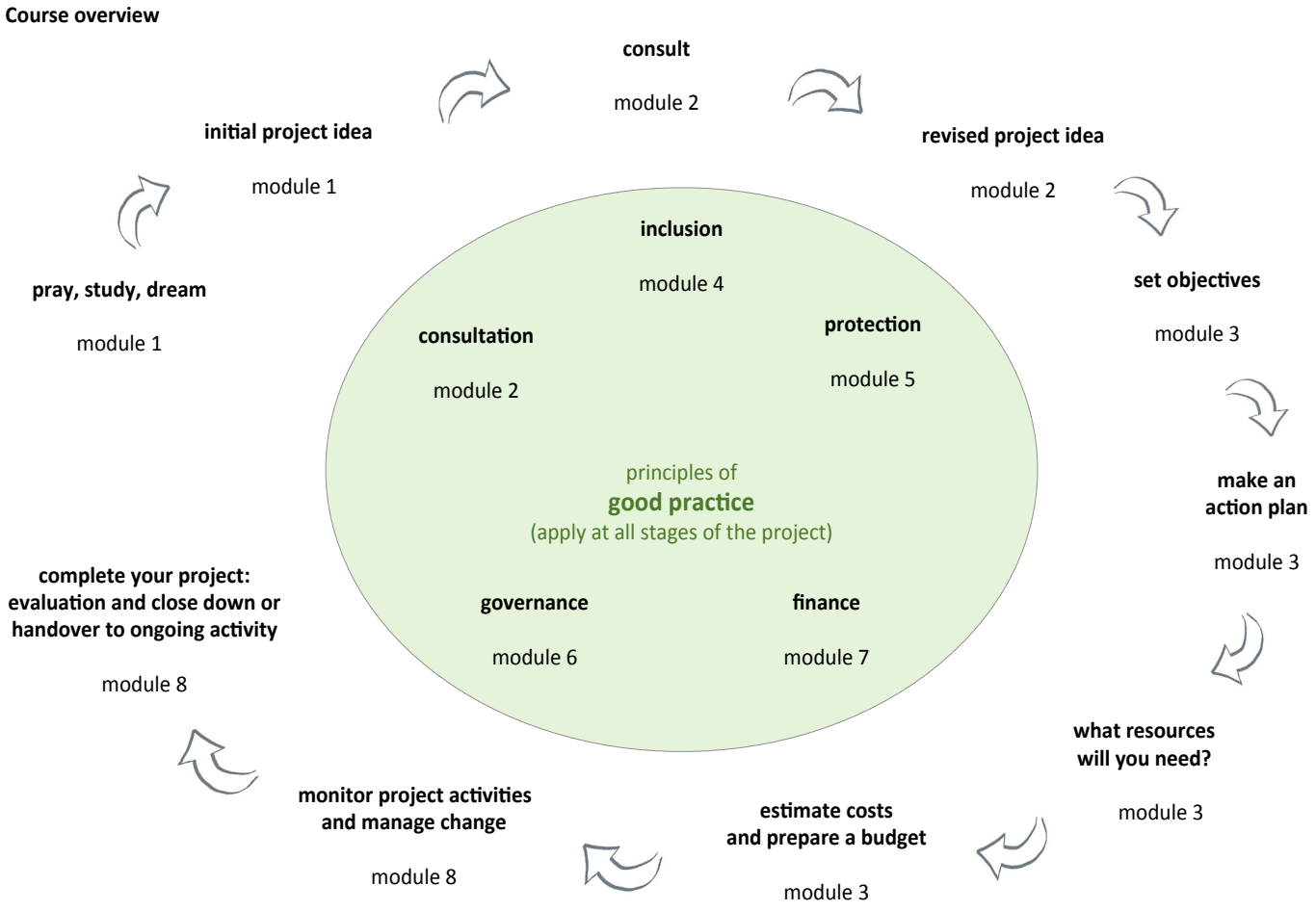
Module 8: Project Management

- Work monitoring
- Managing change
- Working with volunteers
- Evaluating your project
- Handover / completion of the project
- Self-development

Looking at the details of the content above, you can see that you will learn both the practicalities and principles of setting up a project:

- practicalities - the practical steps you need to take to get a project up and running (things like writing an action plan, budgeting, monitoring progress and setting up a project committee to look after the running of the project)
- principles - the values of good practice (things like consulting and including people, assessing risks, being answerable, fair and open)

This is shown in the following diagram, which we will keep coming back to throughout the course.



Outside ring: the stages of planning and carrying out a project (the practicalities).
Inside circle: the principles of good practice, which apply at all stages of the project

The practical stages of setting up and running a project are shown in the outside ring of the diagram.

The principles of good practice that apply at all stages of the life of a project are shown in the inner circle of the diagram.

How Is Each Module Structured?

Each module has the following structure:

- Title page
- Key ideas and terms used in the module
- Introduction and overview – including a summary of what the participant will learn in the module
- Progress monitor
- Bible study
- Module content arranged in 3, 4 or 5 sections, with a total of around 7 workbook activities including one or two tasks to develop your project plan.

And at the end of each module:

- A quiz to check your understanding and learning from the module.
- An opportunity to reflect on your learning – to write down what you found most interesting, surprising or new in the module.
- A check list to make sure you have completed all the workbook activities and project plan development for the module.

The course has been designed as a print resource. You will probably get most from it if you download and print a hard copy of each module.

Will I be applying my learning to my own idea for a project?

Yes! As you go through the course you will apply your learning to a specific example of a development project. You choose the project idea you will work on. It will be your working example, to focus your learning and bring it to life. You will keep applying what you learn in each module to your own project idea.

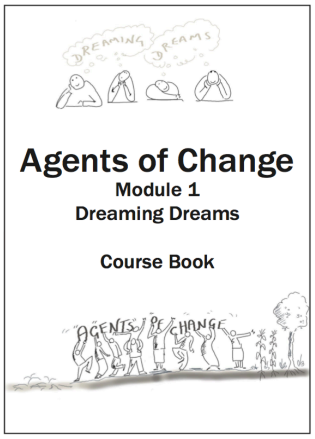
This means that as you study the course you will develop your project idea into a project plan. The project plan is a blueprint for setting up a project. It will contain the project's purpose, objectives, action plan and much more.

You might already have an idea for the community project you want to work on. If this is the case, the first module will help you test your idea. But you might not yet have a project idea. Don't worry – that's fine! The first module will help you come up with your project idea, which you will use throughout the course.

It is important to note that you will not actually be setting up the project while you study the course. You need to complete the whole course before you think about whether to put your plan into action. See the section below on 'after the course' (including the 'important note') for more on this.

How Does The Course Work?

Each module has a course book and a workbook.
Participants work through these at their own pace (but within a set time-frame).



Course book

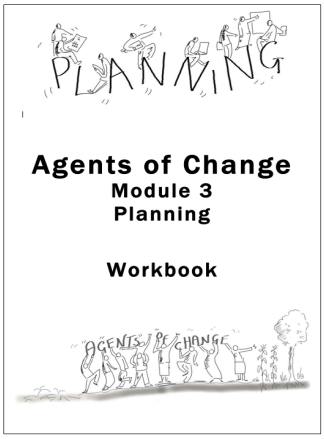
The course book contains all the teaching for the module.

Always start each module by reading the course book. it will guide you to the activities in your workbook. It is essential you do this and do not try to fill in the workbook without studying the course book.

Workbook

The workbook contains questions and practical exercises, which you complete as you go through the module. These activities will help you think about the knowledge you already have (from your own life experience) and will strengthen your leaning from the module by practising the ideas you read about.

The workbook is also where you will work on your project idea, developing it into a project plan as you progress through the modules.



At the end of the module you send your workbook electronically (or by WhatsApp if this is problematic) to your mentor for feedback and comment. Your mentor is not examining you. They are there to support you and help you get the most out of your studies. Once you are both happy with your work, you can progress onto the next module.

✦ What Will I Gain From The Course?

The most important thing you will gain from the course is the knowledge of how to set up a community project – and the confidence and inspiration to do so. You will also have a detailed plan for your project idea.

You will receive a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of the Agents of Change Programme from the Anglican Alliance in recognition of your achievement, which will provide evidence of the subject areas you have covered in the course.

You will be invited to join a fellowship of graduates from the course. You will be able to be in contact with other participants, sharing your experiences.

Participants who show particular flair and enthusiasm will be invited to act as mentors to future participants. You will be given guidance on how to be a mentor.

✦ What Can I Do With My Learning After The Course?

By the end of the course you will have learned a great deal about how to set up a development project in your community and how to do it well. **You will not actually be setting up the project while you study the course.** You need to complete the whole course before you think about putting your plan into action.

There are different possibilities for what you do with your learning at the end of this course. Here are some of the options. You might...

- Put your project plan into action in your community. You might feel that this is what God is calling you to do. (You will still need to consult your community properly).
- Put a different idea into practice - but using all the knowledge and understanding you have gained from the course. You might feel God is calling you to do something right away, but that the project idea you have been working with throughout the course is not the right one, or that you need to work with your community to find out together what the priority is.
- Decide that, for you, the course has just been an academic / learning exercise for now. You might feel that the time isn't right to put a project into action – but you will know how to do it well when the time comes.
- Just use parts of your learning - to improve what you are already doing or help others run projects better.

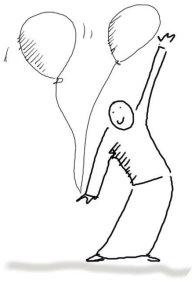
Recap

Dream Dreams

Choose Your Project Idea

Go Through The Course

Develop Your Project Idea Into A Project Plan



Complete The Course

Decide Whether You Want To Put Your Plan Into Action

IMPORTANT NOTE

For the purpose of this course we have asked you to think of your own project idea – which you will test, work with and develop into a project plan as you work through this course.

However, in the real world, it is best practice to go into your community to find out what their priority is. Bible study, reflecting on our calling as Christians to be Agents of Change and dreaming dreams are all best done in the community.

Traditional approaches to development have focused on a "problem", "need" or "challenge" that a "project" is set up to put right. Often, the "need" is identified by someone (for example an individual or charity) from outside of the community and, usually, the project depends on outside ("donor") funding. This can be very disempowering for the community, even if they benefit from the project itself. This is because such a "needs-based" approach focuses only on what the community DOES NOT have, rather than balancing this with looking at what the community DOES have – and using it.

Increasingly, the Church is moving towards "Assets-Based Community Development". You might see this shortened to ABCD. This is where communities are the agents of their own change. Together, communities look at both their challenges and their assets (capabilities, resources, skills and experience). Together, communities decide on their priorities for change, come up with project ideas and plans and put them into practice using the community's assets – often without outside help or funding.

So another possibility when you finish this course is that you decide that you wantto explore such a fully community-based approach, rather than suggest a particular project idea yourself. If you do, the skills you will learn in this course will help you very much. This course takes an assets-based approach. It expects development to come from within communities, with community members fully involved. It teaches important principles and skills for setting up and running a project whether that project idea comes from an individual or the whole community.

If at the end of the course you decide you want to take the fully community-based approach to working, you will find information and links in the 'next steps' section at the end of module 8.

✦ How Long Will The Course Take?

Each module should take around 12 – 15 hours to complete. However, everyone works at different speeds, so this is only a rough estimate. Also, different participants will come with different prior knowledge and experience. So you might find some of the modules are more familiar to you and others les so, and this will affect how quickly you get through the material.

The course will work best for both you and your mentor if you aim to get through it in around 6 months. This will keep you focused and engaged with the material and you will find it a much more rewarding experience than if you do the course piecemeal over a longer period.

You therefore need to commit between 4 and 6 hours' study per week for 6 months to the course.

We strongly recommend you draw up a timetable for your study, setting aside the time necessary for it. Please talk about it with members of your family and with your church so they understand what you are doing and can support you in your undertaking.

✦ Is There A Time Limit?

You will have up to one year to complete the course from the date you were accepted onto it.
This time limit is given for the benefit of both the participant (to keep them focused) and the mentor (so they know what their commitment is). It should be plenty of time to complete your studies.

However, we realise that life can be very unpredictable and sometimes factors beyond a participant's control can cause them to have to put their study aside for a time. In such circumstances it should be possible to extend the time limit, but your mentor will need to agree to the extension.

✦ How Is The Course Assessed?

There is no test at the end of the programme and you will not be getting marks for your work. We do want you to receive recognition for what you have put into your learning and unless there are real problems with the material you send in, your mentor will inform the Anglican Alliance that you should receive a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of the Agents of Change Programme.

✦ Can I Study With Others, In A Group?

Yes! In fact, you will probably find the course more enjoyable if you do so as you will be able to share your ideas, discuss any difficulties and support one another. The ideal number for a group is between 4 and 6 people. Another option is to do the course with a friend, so that you can act as "study buddies" to each other, supporting and encouraging each other.

If you want to do the course with a friend or as part of a group, first find the people you want to study with. These can be people in your church or wider community. Perhaps you could talk to your priest and ask them to talk about the course at church, to enthuse others about it. Talk to your friends and give them a copy of this introductory guide or show them the introductory video.

Your group will work best if its members are from roughly the same geographical area (village, town or city). People will need to be able to get to meetings easily and it will help if you tend to see each other regularly in normal life – so you can remind each other about meetings and ask about one another's progress.

Each member of the group (or pair) will need to apply and be accepted onto the Agents of Change course and you will all have the same mentor. If you wish, you can even all work on the same project idea, creating your project plan together. Several people contributing their learning and ideas is likely to produce a better plan and you will gain a great deal from working together. But please note that you will still each need to submit your own individual workbooks to your mentor.

However, there can be difficulties working with others in a group, which you should be aware of. In the pilot versions of the course, all participants had to be part of a group. Problems arose, however, when group members failed to attend group sessions and the groups then broke down, leaving individual participants adrift. It is therefore vital that if you work as a group you are clear from the outset what commitment will be required from each group member, what the ground rules are, and most importantly, that you decide in advance the times, dates and place you will meet.

It will also be important that the group functions as a community of equals. Whatever someone's position might be outside the group, you will work through the programme together as equals.

The group will need to comply with the one year maximum time limit for completing the course.

There are no longer specific activities and work set for groups. Instead, group sessions should be to discuss the course content, check your understanding, talk about anything you found difficult to understand and work on your project plan(s) together.

You will be sent further guidance on group working if you apply to do the course as part of a group.

✦ Who Can Do The Course?

Agents of Change is a programme of the Anglican Alliance. Any Anglican anywhere in the world can apply to do it. We currently do not have the capacity to offer the course to non-Anglicans.

Applicants must be an active member of an Anglican Church / community. You will need a reference and statement of support from your parish priest* before you can be accepted onto the course. *Or college/ seminary principal if you are a theological student, or head of your community if you are a member of a religious order.

The number of people we can accept onto the course is limited by the availability of mentors. It might therefore not be possible to accommodate everyone who applies.

We therefore ask that you pray and think carefully before you apply for the course and only do so if...

1. You can commit the time required to complete the course. This is at least 3 hours a week for 6 months.
2. You have reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet.
3. You are confident in using a computer and have an active email account that you check regularly (at least once a week).
4. You are confident working in English. We hope to make the course available in other languages in time, but at present it is only available in English.
5. You want to be an Agent of Change! That is, you want to help bring about positive change and more abundant living in your community and want to acquire the knowledge and skills to help you do so.

We will ask you to agree to all these conditions before you are accepted onto the course.

Is There A Financial Cost To Do The Agents Of Change Course?

No. The course is offered free of charge. However, please be aware that there will be a significant time cost for both you and your mentor.

Please also bear in mind that sometimes people do not value things that are free as highly as things that they have to pay for. Please only apply for the course if you are serious about undertaking and completing it.

Do I Need Any Qualifications To Be Able To Do The Course?

No. There are no formal qualifications you need to have or level of education you need to have completed to be accepted onto the course. We want Agents of Change to be available to as many people as possible, whatever their educational achievements to date.

You also do not need prior knowledge of any of the material in this course.

However, you need to be aware that the course does require proficiency in both reading and writing in English and that it is quite challenging academically. It covers many areas and goes into depth. We have tried to make the language simple and straightforward and we provide an audio version of the material so that you can hear it as well as read it.

As a rough guide, if you can understand and follow the material in this introductory guide, we think you will be able to undertake the course. If you are struggling with it, you will struggle with the course.

Do I Need Access To A Computer And The Internet To Be Able To Do The Course?

Yes. Agents of Change is a distance learning course and experience to date has shown that it only works when participants have reliable and regular access to a computer and the Internet. This is because you will need to send your workbook to your mentor by email and will probably do most of your communication with them by e-mail.

This does not mean you have to own your own computer or have access to the Internet in your home. But it does mean you need to be confident using a computer and have your own e-mail account, which you check regularly (at least once a week).

Do I Have To Study The Course Content On A Computer?

No. You *can* study the course this way, and will find it easier to watch the videos and have more fun with the interactive activities if you use a computer to access the course materials. However, we appreciate that this is not convenient or practical for many participants.

We have therefore now made it possible for you to print out the course content, so that you can study it from a hard copy wherever and whenever you want. You will still need to find a way to watch the videos but we have adapted the interactive activities for the print version.

How Do I Apply To Do The Course?

Complete and submit the on-line application form. This asks for your personal details and your reasons for wanting to do the course. You will also be asked to sign a declaration about the time you will commit to the course and your access to a computer and the Internet.

Image: Bill Crooks Mosaic Creative/ Discovery Tearfund

We also need a reference from your parish priest / college principal / community head in support of your application. We ask for their contact details on the application form. They will be asked about your suitability for the course, your ability to undertake it and their willingness to support and encourage you.

If you want to apply as a group, each member needs to apply individually. Each member will also need a referral form from his or her parish priest. You do not all have to be members of the same church.

✦ Once I've Applied, What Happens Next?

You will receive an email acknowledging your application. We will ask for a referral from your parish priest (if we have not already received one).

When we have received both your application and the referral from your parish priest we will assess your application.

If you are suitable and we have the capacity to take on more participants, you will be offered a **provisional acceptance** onto the course. We will email you to let you know and ask you to confirm you wish to proceed.

We will then send you the first module of the course by email and/or give you access to it on line (you will be able to download it and print it if you wish). You will also be provided with the workbook for Module 1 and the Project Plan template.

You will have **one calendar month** to complete module 1 and return your completed workbook to the course coordinator.

The course coordinator will look at your work and if it is of high enough standard will allocate you a mentor. At this point you are given **full acceptance** onto the course.

Your mentor will be sent your work and he or she will introduce themselves to you by email. This is the person who will accompany you throughout the rest of the course. They will send you the material for module 2.

If the work you submit for module 1 is not of high enough standard yet, do not worry. You have not failed! The course coordinator will make some suggestions for improvement and once they are made will allocate you a mentor, as described above. The course is quite challenging, but we are all here to help you through it.

This process is summarized in the following flow diagram:

What Preparation Do I Need To Do Before Starting The Course?

Tell your church what you are doing and ask them to support you in prayer. Let your family and friends know too. It can be a challenge to study through a distance-learning programme, especially when you may have other commitments supporting your family. It is therefore important to have their support and understanding about what you are taking on.

Set aside the time you will need to study. Try to decide in advance what times and which days will suit you best. Make a study timetable or diary. Don't forget that there will be some weeks when you will need to take a break – for personal, local, national or religious holidays.

How Do I Get The Course Materials?

As described above, once you have been fully accepted onto the course, your mentor will send you the course materials. When you have successfully completed one module, you will be sent the next one.

What Is The Role Of The Mentor?

Your mentor is an important part of this programme. She or he will be an experienced member of the wider church who is working with the Anglican Alliance to help and support you as you work through the programme. Your mentor will have the same materials that you have and will be the person to turn to for advice. Remember that your mentor is not a teacher. The course materials do the teaching.

There are several specific times when you will need to be in touch with your mentor (but you are encouraged to be in touch at other times too):

1. When your mentor is allocated, he or she will get in touch with you to introduce themselves. Please introduce yourself to your mentor too. He or she will want to know something about who you are, where you live, what you do and so on. They will also want to make sure that you are happy using the course materials and will want to discuss your proposed timetable for the course. You can discuss how you would like to be in touch with each other. Email might be best, but you might prefer Skype or Whatsapp.

2. Your mentor will want to see your workbook at the end of each module. This is to make sure that you have understood the module's content and are ready to move on. Your mentor will provide feedback on how your ideas are developing, and how well you are benefiting from the programme.

3. When you have completed the programme and received feedback from your mentor on your work on all eight modules, you will have a short time to make any changes that you would like to your workbooks and project plan. Then you will need to send final copies of your workbooks and project plan to your mentor. She or he will read these and return them to you with some final comments about your project and your learning. This feedback is an important part of the programme. We never stop learning and the further ideas from your mentor will help you to learn even more from the work you have done.

At this point your mentor should be able to certify that you have completed the programme to a satisfactory level. There is no test at the end of this programme and you will not be getting marks for your work. However, completing this programme to a satisfactory level is a real achievement. So you deserve your achievement to be recognised. Unless there are real problems with the material you send in, your mentor will inform the Anglican Alliance that you should receive a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of the 'Agents of Change' Programme.

Your mentor is likely to be a busy person. She or he will also be someone who has been chosen because of their knowledge and experience, and their interest in the work you will be doing. If you have any problems as you work through the modules, or if something is not clear, then by all means ask your mentor for advice. Use your mentor's talents wisely. And remember that the Anglican Alliance is also here to help.

✦ What Do I Do If I Don't Hear From My Mentor?

If you do not hear from your mentor after contacting them, please try again. If you still do not hear back from them, please get in contact with the course co-ordinator, agentsofchange@anglicancommunion.org.

✦ What Do I Do If I Have Difficulties With Any Part Of The Course?

Ask your mentor for help. Get in touch with him or her and try to explain what it is that you are having problems with. Remember, your mentor is there to support you and will be happy to try to help.

Image: Bill Crooks Mosaic Creative/ Discovery Tearfund

However, do bear in mind that your mentor is likely to be a busy person, so might not be able to respond immediately. Could you talk to someone locally? Talking your difficulty through with a friend before contacting your mentor can be a good idea. This is why studying the course with a friend or in a group can be so helpful. If you are finding a lot of written material a struggle, listen to the audio version of the course. Many people find it easier to learn from listening rather than reading.

You can also contact the course co-ordinator, agentsofchange@anglicancommunion.org, if there is something that you find unclear in the course materials. She will be happy to hear from you: if you find something unclear, it probably means other people will too!

How Do I Fill Out My Workbook And Get It To My Mentor (especially if I'm working from a print copy of the course?)

The workbook for each module is a word document, so if you are studying the course on a computer you can fill it in electronically as you go through each module. Keep saving your work and when you have completed the module rename the document so it includes your name and the module number and simply send it to your mentor as an attachment to an email.

If you are working from a print version of the course, also print out the workbook when you print out the content for each module. Fill in the workbook neatly by hand as you go through the module. At the end of the module you will need to scan or take a photo of each page of your workbook and send the scans or photos to your mentor as attachments to an email.

How Much Do I Have To Write In The Workbooks?

As you work through the eight modules in Agents of Change you will find plenty of occasions when you are asked to think, write or do something. The wording for these questions is repeated in your workbooks for you to fill in your answers.

It is important that you think carefully about what you are going to write in these spaces. Remember that the reason for these questions and why you have space to answer them is that the process helps you to learn.

Very short answers – just a few words – will be unhelpful for you. You need to have given more thought to the question if you are going to learn from it.

Very long answers will not help you either. If there is too much detail then you will not know the main points you are trying to make.

The spaces provided in the workbook provide a guide for you in writing your answers. Try to fill the space provided. You may need some extra space for questions that are of special interest to you.

What Sort Of Things Should I Write In My Workbooks And Project Plan?

This is a question that several participants in the first group to complete Agents of Change asked. Below, you will find examples of helpful and unhelpful answers to some of the questions from modules 1 and 2 to help you to understand what we are looking for. You will of course need to provide your own answers, not repeat our ideas from here.

There is one important point to make first. This programme is produced for the Anglican Alliance and is delivered through the Church. We know that you are on the programme because you have a Christian reason for being here.

So if we ask you, 'Why do you want to make a change in your community?' we know that you will have an answer something like: 'To be a better Christian' or 'To serve God' or 'Because I am a disciple.' This is both true and important - and we want you to express your faith. However, we are also looking for the practical application of your faith. So you also need to say something like, 'Because I think this group of people in my community have this sort of problem and I want to find a way of improving things for them.'

Here we provide some examples of unhelpful and helpful answers to some questions from the first two modules (from both the workbooks and the project plan).

✦ Describe the community that your project will serve (Module 1, activity 1)

The kind of answer we are looking would be something like:

- It is my local village, which used to be just a rural farming community. Now the road through it has been properly surfaced, there are lots of small factories, the farmers are losing their land and lots of new people have moved in because of the new jobs. The farmers and the factory workers argue with each other a lot and we are not a community any more.

- The main occupation in my village is farming and most farms can grow just enough to support the family network. We know in some parts of the country the farmers work together and can produce more and better crops. This means they can sell some of them earn some money. Then they can spend it on things like school or something for the home and all have a better life. We need to do the same.

- I have seen in the last few years that there seem to be a lot more children in the town who do not belong to anyone. They live in small groups by themselves and no adults appear to look after them. I am worried that harm may come to them. They might be abused. They do not get properly fed or have the chance to go to school.

The following examples of answers are not good. They do not have enough information or detail in them.

- It is my local village
- It is the local poor farmers
- It is the children living on the streets in our local village
- It is the poor people of the world.
- It is all the poor people in my country.

✦ When have you seen examples of people building trust with your own community, or other communities?

✦ What techniques did they use?

✦ Does your own community trust you?

✦ How can you improve that trust? (Module 2, activity 4)

The kind of answer we are looking would be something like:

- The elders in our community have always been responsible for making the important decisions. We all learnt even when we were children to trust them but the village has grown and life has become more complicated. Sometimes people wonder whether their wisdom is enough to help us in changing times.

- I will need to work hard to encourage people to trust me. I need to be honest about what I am doing and why when I consult the community. I must make sure that everyone has a chance to comment. I must not claim to be able to do things when I am not. I must make sure that I tell people regularly how things are going and ask for their feedback.

- We elect a mayor and council in our town and they tell us before the elections what they are going to do for us. They use the local radio to tell us what they are doing but everyone suspects that

they do not tell us the whole story. There have been other cases in the region where people have taken bribes and some of our community are not sure about our own council.

- Coming from the church can be both helpful and unhelpful. Other Christians may well trust me because I am from the church. Some people are not believers or even do not like the church. I will need to make sure that they understand I want to help the community because I am a Christian and not because I want to convert them to become Christians. The whole way I go about the project must help to show that I can be trusted. It will certainly help if not all of the project group are from the church.

The following examples of answers are not good. They do not properly answer the question that was asked.

- Our tradition is to leave decision in our community to the elders. They make the decisions and we all trust them. I will ask the elders to support me so the community will trust me.

- We elect a mayor and council in our town and they tell us what they are going to do for us. They use the local radio to tell us what they are doing. People will trust me because they know I come from the church. I will tell them that the church has trained me to help the community.

✦ What have you found most interesting, surprising or new in this module?

This question comes at the end of every module. Taking Module 2 – Consultation as our example….

A good answer to this question would be something like:

- I learnt that consultation is about finding out what people think needs doing (about the problem that you have noticed). It is not getting them to agree to the project I had already decided upon.

I was interested to learn that I need to consult the people really affected by the problem I want to deal with rather than just the community leaders and the people I already know.

An unhelpful answer to this question would be something like:

- Consultation means asking people their views

I need to make sure I consult with everyone involved

Here are some example answers to questions that help you develop your project plan (the section on planning your community consultation)

✦ Who will you consult? (Who do you need to tell about your ideas? Who do you need to find out information from?)

The kind of answer we are looking would be something like:

- I will make sure that I consult with a wide range of people in the community.

I need to include the community leaders, the ordinary people and in particular some of the more disadvantaged people. Especially I must include the young mothers whose needs I am concerned about I must make sure I also consult any other groups in the community who might help them so we work together

An unhelpful answer to either of these questions would be something like:

- the community

This answer has no detail and does not show any evidence of having read the module content.

✦ How will you find out the information you need?

The kind of answer we are looking would be something like:

- There is no single answer to this question.

Some individuals such as the community leaders I will hope to interview.
The general views of the community I will find out by carrying out same door to door survey. I will undertake this with a friend who I will train. I will choose someone who is the opposite gender to me so we do not scare anyone we talk to.
Some of the young women may find it difficult to talk freely. I will need to speak with one or two of them whom I know to find out how best to get their view.

An unhelpful answer to this question would be something like:

- I will carry out a survey

Again, there is no detail. It does not show any learning from having studied the module.

✦ What will you do with the results of the consultation?

The kind of answer we are looking would be something like:

- Once I have gained the information then two or three of us will go through it and work out what the results are telling us.

After I have done that it will give me some ideas for how best to make the project work.
I might talk through some of those ideas first with some of the young mothers.
Once I know they are happy I will have a meeting when I can show people what we discovered. I will explain what we plan, and get any of their ideas and suggestions. I hope I will get some volunteers to help as well.

An unhelpful answer to this question would be something like:

- I will use the results of the consultation to help me decide on the detail of my project

This answer is too brief. It des not show the writer has understood the module content.

A final comment
We hope the ideas above have helped you to understand the sorts of things we are looking for. We want to help you to learn as much as you can, to become an effective Agent of Change and to design and deliver a project that will make a real and worthwhile difference in your community.
That is an important task – we should not make it too easy – neither do we want it to be too difficult.

Remember that your mentor will be happy to give you plenty of support.