


THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
MISSION

The Aspen Institute mission is twofold: to foster values-based leadership, encouraging individuals to reflect on the ideals and ideas that define a good society, and to provide a neutral and balanced venue for discussing and acting on critical issues.

The Aspen Institute does this primarily in four ways:

- **Seminars**, which help participants reflect on what they think makes a good society, thereby deepening knowledge, broadening perspectives and enhancing their capacity to solve the problems leaders face.
- **Young-leader fellowships** around the globe, which bring a selected class of proven leaders together for an intense multi-year program and commitment. The fellows become better leaders and apply their skills to significant challenges.
- **Policy programs**, which serve as nonpartisan forums for analysis, consensus building, and problem solving on a wide variety of issues.
- **Public conferences and events**, which provide a commons for people to share ideas.

The Institute is based in Washington, DC, Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and has an international network of partners.

EVOLUTION

Historically, the Institute had two primary lines of business that operated separately: a Seminars Program that recruited executives to multi-day discussions; and a set of Policy Programs that were somewhat independent of each other and the Institute.

Both use *The Aspen Method* of conducting meetings and seminars: a moderated dialogue in a small group setting where participants from various backgrounds and perspectives learn from each other through an interactive discussion of specific readings.

In the past, the Institute had minimal public programs or leadership initiatives. In 2004 a strategic decision was made to focus future growth in these two areas in order to increase its reach, bring in new participants and supporters, and integrate a disparate set of programs.

CURRENT PRINCIPLES

- Continue to grow the leadership initiatives globally and expand public programs.
- Provide opportunities for more horizontal integration across programs by linking public programs, leadership initiatives, and policy programs. Environment, education, and health are the initial areas for cross-fertilization.
- The Institute has increasingly become a venue for convening nonpartisan commissions to help resolve specific issues. The Institute will remain open to limited opportunities for convening such commissions where it can make a difference.
- Incubate and facilitate action by individuals attending Institute programs.
- Expand the domestic geographic footprint with a focus on programs in New York, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay area.
- The Institute's general policy is that any seminar, leadership initiative, public forum, or policy program should support itself either through paid public participation, foundation funding, or other donations.

These current principles provide a framework for going forward; however, opportunities for innovation and experimentation that do not fit within our mission will be undertaken periodically if there is the potential for a high impact on society.

THE FUTURE

- **Broaden the reach; deepen the dialogue**

Broaden the reach of the Institute and its ideas in a measured way. At the core of the Institute's approach is an emphasis on in-person dialogue. As the breadth of public exposure is expanded, the goal is to encourage new participants to deepen their involvement with the Institute's programs.

 - **Use of technology**

Expand the use of technology by creating branded Aspen Institute channels for video clips of activities and an online community that will deepen participation in the Institute. Use the internet community and online alumni network to link participants in various fellowships, seminars, and programs to facilitate ways for audiences to connect with each other to expand their impact on society.
- **Connections across divisions**

Continue to collaborate within our lines of business in important and relevant areas. Poverty, international relations, arts, and philanthropy are key areas for exploration.
- **A strong Aspen Seminar**

The Aspen Seminar is at the heart of the Aspen Institute and at the core of the fellowships. Strengthen marketing, scholarships, and the moderator corps to insure long-term viability of the Aspen Seminar.
- **Aspen Global Leadership Network**

Weave the various leadership fellowships into a cohesive global network and to connect fellows across programs in order to facilitate action.
- **New young-leader fellowships**

Encourage careful growth of new fellowships in strategic locations around the world and in new sectors.

CRITERIA

New initiatives and programs will be evaluated in light of the mission and the above strategic priorities using the following categories:

- **Definition** of the program or activity
- **Mission** of the program or activity
- **Rationale:** Why would the Institute do this? Does it fit with the Institute's mission?
- **Target audience:** Whom is the program trying to serve?
- **Sustainability:** Will the program be viable for the prescribed time period?
- **Metric(s) of success:** How will program be measured?
- **Funding philosophy:** Does the program cover costs, make money, or seek a subsidy?