

AMBASSADORS FOR DIALOGUE – AN IMPACT STUDY



Ambassadors for Dialogue – An Impact Study

Prepared by Als Research
for DUF - Danish Youth Council

Authored by: Kira de Hemmer Jeppesen

Als Research ApS
Ny Vestergade 1, 2.
1471 København K.
www.alsresearch.dk

ISBN: 978-87-93373-03-7

Cover photo: Kira de Hemmer Jeppesen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
ABSTRACT	4
CHAPTER 1	6
1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT STUDY	6
1.1 About the Ambassadors for Dialogue Programme	6
1.2 Objectives of the Impact Study	7
1.3 Data Set and Research Methods	10
1.4 Structure of the Report	13
CHAPTER 2	14
2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	14
CHAPTER 3	18
3 THE FOUR PHASES OF AFD	18
CHAPTER 4	23
4 INDIVIDUAL AMBASSADORS' LEARNING JOURNEYS	23
4.1 Khalid - International Ambassador from Jordan	23
4.2 Salma - International Ambassador from Egypt	24
4.3 Marie - International Ambassador from Denmark	26
4.4 Omar - National Ambassador from Egypt	27
4.5 Hussein - National Ambassador from Jordan	28
CHAPTER 5	31
5 AMBASSADORS' COLLECTIVE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	31
5.1 Motivations, Expectations and Immediate Reactions to the AFD Programme	32
5.2 A Developed Understanding of Dialogue	37
5.3 Shaping the Personality of the Ambassadors	41
5.4 Increased Understanding between Youth from Denmark and the Middle East	47
5.5 The Ability to Work in Intercultural Settings	51
5.6 The Ability to Teach Methods and Values of Dialogue to Others	53
5.7 Motivations for Continuing in the Programme	54
CHAPTER 6	58
6 PRIMARY LEARNING SPACES AND DIALOGICAL LEARNING PATTERNS	58
6.1 Intercultural Dialogue Activities	59
6.2 In-between the intercultural dialogue activities and after the phase(s)	83
CHAPTER 7	99
7 EMPLOYING DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE	99

7.1	Using Dialogue in Personal Life	99
7.2	Using Dialogue in Professional Life	105
7.3	Using Dialogue in Organisational Life	110
7.4	Using Dialogue to Shape one's Life	113
CHAPTER 8		115
8	THE FUTURE OF THE AFD PROGRAMME	115
8.1	AFD as a Movement or a Programme	115
8.2	Suggestions on How to Improve the AFD Programme	116
LITTERATURE		121

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an impact study of Danish Youth Councils (DUF) programme *Ambassadors for Dialogue* (AFD) - an intercultural dialogue programme in corporation between the WE Centre in Jordan, the Egyptian Youth Federation (EYF) in Egypt and DUF. The impact study was conducted for DUF over the period April to September 2015.

The impact study is a primarily qualitative study based on participant observation during an international training seminar, and interviews with 46 young volunteers from Denmark, Egypt and Jordan as well as a number of stakeholders. Additionally, the impact study draws on quantitative data from an online survey including 30 young volunteers.

Als Research would like to thank all informants who participated in the study; ambassadors for dialogue who let themselves be subject of participant observation, took part in interviews and completed the survey. Without your contributions, personal experiences and opinions this impact study would not have been possible. Also, we would like to thank the management of the WE Centre in Jordan as well as the EYF in Egypt, who welcomed us kindly during both the training seminar in April and at our follow up trip in June.

The impact study has been conducted by consultant Kira de Hemmer Jeppesen. External consultant Maria Fahmy has contributed with data collection among the Arabic-speaking informants in Egypt and Jordan.

The responsibility for all results and conclusions is placed solely on Als Research.

Copenhagen, February 2016.

Photographs by Christer Holte Fotografi (Denmark, Oct 2014) & Kira de Hemmer Jeppesen (Egypt, April 2015)

ABSTRACT

This impact study of DUF's Ambassadors for Dialogue programme explores and documents the intended and unintended impact of the programme on its core volunteers – the 'ambassadors for dialogue' - both in terms of *result* and *process*.

In terms of *result* the impact study explores what the ambassadors have learned and gained from their participation in the programme, and which significant changes and developments it has led to in their lives. The study shows that ambassadors experience an impact on themselves and their lives as a result of their participation in the AFD programme. The results of the ambassadors' participation in the AFD programme can be summed up in five points: a developed understanding of dialogue, the shaping of the personality of the ambassadors, an increased understanding between youth from Denmark and the Middle East, the ability to work in intercultural settings and the ability to teach methods and values of dialogue to others.

In terms of *process* the study explores how, when and where the ambassadors learn and develop within the framework of the programme. The study shows that international ambassadors generally find the learning environment of the AFD programme fruitful. A number of significant learning spaces are to be found within the context of the intercultural dialogue activities while others are to be found in-between seminars and after the ambassadors' international involvement. Particularly the intercultural, participatory and interactive aspects of the AFD programme have major impacts on the ambassadors and help create a learning environment resembling a community of practice.

Lastly, the impact study explores how and where the ambassadors use what they have learned and gained from their participation in the AFD programme. The study shows that ambassadors use dialogue in personal, professional and organisational life, and hence it present multiple examples of ways in which what is being learned within the AFD programme is also used in practice outside the programme. Ambassadors most often apply a dialogical attitude but also use dialogue exercises and transfer the methods and culture of dialogue to other organisation that they are involved in as volunteers or employees.



Ambassadors for Dialogue in Denmark

CHAPTER 1

1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT STUDY

1.1 About the Ambassadors for Dialogue Programme

The *Ambassadors for Dialogue* (AFD) programme is a co-operation between the WE Centre in Jordan, the Egyptian Youth Federation (EYF) and Danish Youth Council (DUF). The programme began as a pilot project in 2009 and has since undergone four phases, each with separate foci and objectives. The programme has developed together with the current situation in the MENA region, and the overall aims in the current fourth phase of the AFD programme is to:

- Foster a dialogical culture among youth (primarily in Jordan and Egypt)
- Enhance mutual understanding between youth across ethnic, religious, ideological and other divides internally in Egypt and Jordan
- Enhance mutual understanding between youth in Denmark and the MENA region (Egypt and Jordan), and between youth in Jordan and Egypt
- Strengthen DUFs member organizations' international work and partnerships (funded by DUF)

In practice, young volunteers from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark are trained in dialogue and workshop facilitation. Thus, they are 'educated' as 'ambassadors for dialogue'.

28 young volunteers/ambassadors are engaged *internationally* at the same time for a two-year period.¹ New international ambassadors are recruited every second year, when a new phase begins. The international ambassadors gather once in each country during a phase to attend a 10-day training seminar and implement interactive and intercultural dialogue workshops for youth in Jordan, Egypt and Denmark. In between the intercultural activities, the ambassadors implement national dialogue activities in their respective countries.

The national aspect of the programme is particularly present in the MENA region. Besides the internationally trained and engaged ambassadors, *national* ambassadors are recruited, trained and engaged in the programme at the national level in Jordan and Egypt. The training and engagement of the national ambassadors is undertaken by the WE Centre and EYF respectively. No local ambassadors are recruited in Denmark, and the nationally engaged ambassadors are all former or current international ambassadors.

Currently, approximately 50 *national* ambassadors are actively engaged in the programme in Egypt and Jordan in total.

¹ In phase four the AFD programme has worked with two smaller teams of 16, named team A and team B. This size of these smaller teams is spoken positively about by some ambassadors. These two teams were later merged into one team of 28 ambassadors.

Since 2009, 95 young volunteers from Egypt, Jordan and Denmark have been trained and engaged as *international* ambassadors. Some of the ambassadors engaged in the earlier phases of the programme remain actively engaged – on the international level and/or national level.

Since 2009, international and national ambassadors have implemented dialogue workshops for approximately 15.000 youth in Jordan, Egypt and Denmark.

The programme has throughout its existence been fully funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Danish Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP).

DAPP is Denmark's collaboration project with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) strengthening dialogue, partnership and mutual understanding between Denmark and the MENA region. The DAPP programme was launched in 2003 to support the reform and democratization processes in the MENA region and simultaneously strengthen the dialogue with the Arab world through Danish-Arab partnerships.²

DAPP's role in the AFD has been, and remains to be, on a strategic level. The monitoring done by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had little to no influence on the continuous development of contents and form, which the programme has taken since 2009.

1.2 Objectives of the Impact Study

The impact study of the AFD programme is conducted for DUF, with the main objective to:

'Explore and document the intended and unintended impact of the programme on its core volunteers - both in terms of result and process.'

As described in the Terms of Reference, DUF's motivation for carrying out the study is dual. On the one hand DUF wishes to learn from the study in order to further develop and strengthen the AFD programme – in particular pertaining to the learning and development processes of current and future ambassadors. On the other hand, and in order to boost its ability to justify the existence and continuation of the programme vis-à-vis donors and potential sceptics, DUF wishes to harvest documentation of the AFD program's impact (primarily on its core volunteers).

By means of the impact study, DUF wishes to explore and document the impact of the AFD programme on its core volunteers, the 'ambassadors for dialogue', both in terms of *result* and *process*.

With regard to *result*, the objective of the impact study is to explore and document *what* the ambassadors have learned and gained from their participation in the programme, and *which* significant changes and developments it has led to in their lives – including how the ambassadors have 'used' what they learned and gained in their personal, volunteer and professional lives.

² <http://detarabiskeinitiativ.dk/english/>

With regard to *process*, the objective of the impact study is to explore *how* the ambassadors learned and developed within the framework of the programme: How and when did their learning and development happen? What made them learn and develop? What experiences, activities, challenges, etc. sparked and created the significant changes in their lives?

Furthermore – and building on this – the impact study is exploring and identifying the ambassadors' *dialogical learning patterns*: What, where and how did the ambassadors learn about *dialogue* and what it means to *be* in dialogue? What 'spaces' (here understood broadly as events, elements, circumstances, situations, processes, etc.) made this learning possible? What was conducive to the ambassadors' dialogical learning and what was not? And is it possible to identify common learning patterns among the ambassadors?

Thus, by identifying the most significant 'dialogical learning spaces' DUF wishes to (re)create such spaces in the further implementation and development of the AFD programme.³

With regards to the core volunteers, the impact study is focusing on both *international* and *national* ambassadors, in order to identify and analyse relevant differences between the 'categories' of ambassadors pertaining to their learning, learning spaces and learning patterns. The impact study includes *international* ambassadors from phase 2, 3 and 4 (2010-2015). However, a majority of the ambassadors from phase 2 began their involvement with the AFD in the pilot project. Furthermore, the impact study is including currently involved *national* ambassadors from Egypt and Jordan.

With regards to learning, the impact study is focusing on non-formal (planned) as well as informal (unplanned) learning happening within the framework of the programme. For a definitions of how these terms are being used see chapter 5. Part of the non-formal education of the programme happens through taught sessions. The impact study is focusing solely on the learning of the ambassadors, and hence does not include an evaluation of the teaching given by trainers.

With regards to the 'intended and unintended impact', DUF does not work with ambassadors' learning objectives for an entire phase but rather with intentions and desired outcomes for each seminar and its sessions. Partly due to their high level of detail, these are not included in this impact study. The lack of an overall learning objective creates a methodological challenge. Hence, the approach to what is being learned is explorative and the study relies on the ambassadors' own perspectives and reflections. Learning is a thoroughly personal experience, and the study therefore reflects the ambassadors' ability to describe experiences as well as the linguistic and cultural patterns among them. Consequently, the impact study does not include a comprehensive assessment of impact vis-à-vis learning objectives and intentions, but rather includes the overall programme objectives.

³ Terms of Reference, DUF



Ambassadors for Dialogue at a training seminar in Denmark

1.3 Data Set and Research Methods

The impact study is based primarily on a qualitative data set, supplemented by a smaller quantitative data set.

The *qualitative* data set is made up of participant observation and interviews with a total of 53 persons involved with the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme. Interviews have been conducted with 44 international and national ambassadors as well as 9 stakeholders, project coordinators and DAPP representatives.

The *quantitative* data set is made up of a survey distributed to and completed by the international ambassadors for dialogue.

Participant observation

To gather information on the structure, training and learning environment of the AFD programme, we initiated the impact study with seven days of participant observation during an international training seminar held in Cairo 10th-22nd of April 2015. The seminar had 19⁴ participants from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark, and was the last out of three in the fourth phase of the programme.

Arriving on the 10th of April 2015 together with the Danish trainers and leaving on the 18th, the consultant spent one day observing trainers and programme coordinators plan and prepare the forthcoming seminar, four days observing taught training sessions, dialogue exercises and teamwork and two days observing workshops held at universities in Cairo, completed by the ambassadors for dialogue.

It was agreed on with the coordination team of AFD that the consultant's role and positioning during the taught sessions and scheduled learning related activities of the seminar should be primarily observing and only occasionally participating. This form of *moderate participation* was decided upon, in order not to disturb the learning space of the seminar and the learning experience of the ambassadors. Hence the consultant sat silently observing behind the circle of ambassadors during sessions and alongside groups during teamwork. During breaks and non-taught activities in the evenings the consultant was *actively participating*⁵ and engaging with ambassadors, while still being fully identifiable as a researcher.

The group of ambassadors were, prior to and during the first day of the seminar, fully informed about the objectives and research design of the impact study. Furthermore, the consultant was presented as a researcher during observation of workshops.

Ambassadors were given the chance to ask questions about the impact study throughout the entire seminar – a chance some made use of. It is our experience that all ambassadors responded positively to the participant observation and the presence of the consultant. With a profile not far from the ambassadors in both age and background, she positioned herself

⁴ Out of the 28 participants of phase four some were unable to attend this particular seminar.

⁵ DeWalt & DeWalt 2002: 20

primarily with the ambassadors, and was in this way able to observe interactions in the group as well as participate in social activities.

During the training seminar the consultant had informal conversation with multiple ambassadors as well as with trainers (two senior trainers and one junior trainer), but no formal interviews were conducted. Again, this was decided on in agreement with DUF in order not to disturb the ambassadors' learning experience during the seminar.

Interviews with 46 international and national ambassadors for dialogue

The cornerstone and most important data set of the impact study consist of semi-structured interviews with 46 ambassadors for dialogue – the 'core volunteers' of the AFD programme. Participants for the interviews were recruited by DUF, EYF and the WE Centre.

All interviews are conducted anonymously and are based on a semi-structured interview guide, which was developed based on knowledge acquired through participant observation. It has been a priority to interview the ambassadors in person and thus the consultant travelled to Egypt and Jordan during the month of June 2015 to conduct interviews. The majority of the ambassadors were interviewed in groups consisting of three to four persons. A smaller part of the ambassadors had to be interviewed individually due to logistics and a few interviews had to be conducted via Skype, as the interviewees now live abroad.

The 30 *international* ambassadors were interviewed at locations in Egypt, Jordan, and Denmark and via Skype. There is an even distribution among the interviewed ambassadors in terms of nationality, gender and phases in which they have been involved. The interviewees, 15 men and 15 women, represent the three included phases of the AFD programme (12 part of phase 2, 13 part of phase 3, 13 part of phase 4)⁶ as well as the junior trainers (4 junior trainers were interviewed, 3 of which are still active). The group of 30 international ambassadors consist of 9 Jordanians, 9 Egyptians and 12 Danes, mirroring the larger number of Danish ambassadors. The interviews were conducted in English and transcribed.

The 16 *national* ambassadors were interviewed at locations in Egypt and Jordan. There is an even distribution among the interviewed ambassadors in terms of gender and the lengthiness of their national involvement in the AFD programme. The interviewed national ambassadors, 8 women and 8 men, have been involved between 1 month and 3 years. The 16 national ambassadors consist of 10 Egyptians and 6 Jordanians. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and subsequently transcribed and translated into English, which may have affected the ambassadors' original wording in the interviews.

All ambassadors – international as well as national – are in this study anonymised.

Interviews with stakeholders

To gather insights on the structural, organizational and regional perspectives on the AFD programme we conducted interviews with 9 stakeholders, trainers and programme

⁶ Many ambassadors have been part of more than one phase. Ambassadors typically engage in the programme for two upon each other following phases.

coordinators of the programme. These persons were decided upon in agreement with DUF. Stakeholders were interviewed one-on-one in person at locations in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark. The stakeholders who participated in interviews are:

- Rasmus Høgh - Head of Section, MENA office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Jens Hårløv - Regional Coordinator, Danish Programme Office in Jordan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Nadine Hafez - Political Officer, Embassy of Denmark in Cairo
- Helene Horsbrugh - International Director, DUF
- Lasse Tørslev - Programme Manager of the AFD programme, DUF
- Rana Gaber - Programme Coordinator of the AFD programme, EYF
- Mahmoud Hishmah, Programme Coordinator of the AFD programme, Founder and Director at the WE Centre
- Gry Guldberg - Senior trainer at AFD and Education and Leadership consultant
- Jesper Bastholm Munk - Senior trainer at AFD and Educator at Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution

Survey among international ambassadors

As the final part of the impact study an online survey was conducted during the months of July and August 2015. The online questionnaire included 84 questions asked and elements to rate by all respondents and 32 dependent questions, asked to respondents based on their answers to other questions. Depending on the respondents' answers the questionnaire took approximately 12-15 minutes to complete.

The survey was distributed to all international ambassadors trained and engaged since phase 2, a total of 72 ambassadors for dialogue from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark.⁷ The survey was distributed by personalized email and included 2 reminder emails. Email addresses for the ambassadors were provided by DUF.

The survey was completed by 30 ambassadors from all three countries; 5 Egyptians, 6 Jordanians and 19 Danes. There is an even distribution among respondents in terms of gender, 15 women and 15 men, all four phases of the AFD programme including junior trainers, while there is an overrepresentation of Danes. This creates a bias in the survey material, which can however still serve as an indicator. However, the relatively low number of respondents means that the qualitative data stemming from the survey is used as descriptive data primarily supporting significant results of the qualitative data set.

⁷ 37 Danes, 17 Egyptians and 18 Jordanians.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report is falls in 8 chapters:

Chapter 1 provides background and objectives for the impact study, as well as outline the data set.

Chapter 2 provides an executive summary of the impact study, outlining findings and conclusions.

Chapter 3 provides an outline of the four phases of the AFD programme, its developing objectives and the structure of the programme.

Chapter 4 provides five ambassadors' individual learning journeys, as examples of what ambassadors learned and gained individually as a result of being part of the AFD programme.

Chapter 5 focuses on results, as it provides an overview of what the Ambassadors for Dialogue collectively learned and how they developed as part of the programme.

Chapter 6 focuses on the process of learning, as it outlines how, where and when the ambassadors learned, what is outlined in chapter 5.

Chapter 7 focuses on how the Ambassadors for Dialogue collectively use what they have learned and gained by being part of the AFD programme in their daily life outside of the programme.

Chapter 8 looks to the future of the programme as it outline ambassadors' and stakeholders' perspectives and suggestions on how to improve the ADF programme.

CHAPTER 2

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This impact study of the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme shows that the core volunteers – the ambassadors for dialogue – experience an impact on themselves and their lives as a result of their participation in the programme.

What ambassadors learn

The *results* of the ambassadors' participation on the AFD programme can be summed up in five points:

The first learning point is ***a developed understanding of dialogue***. All ambassadors, both national and international, express that they due to their involvement in the AFD programme have developed a deeper understanding of dialogue. This new understanding replaces ambassadors' previous understanding of dialogue, where they did not distinguish between the meaning of a 'conversation', 'talk', 'debate', 'discussion' and 'dialogue'. The ambassadors adopt the dialogical values of trust, honesty, openness and equality used in the AFD programme as part of this developed understanding of dialogue, and connect it to an acceptance of differences in points of views. The contrast between ambassadors' previous understanding and this new understanding of dialogue is particularly strong among Jordanian, Egyptian and national ambassadors.

The second result is the ***shaping of the personality of the ambassadors***. Many ambassadors express that their involvement in the AFD programme and this newly developed understanding of dialogue has influenced, developed and shaped their personality. As dialogue is incorporated the ambassadors self-reflect, shape their values, and reach a different mind-set and an inclusive worldview. This facilitates ambassadors' self-development and influences the way they communicate with others, as they become more reflective, better listeners, less judgemental, more accepting and more self-confident. Both national and international ambassadors express changes in their personalities, but primarily the international ambassadors' involvement in the AFD is transformative.

The third result is an ***increased understanding between youth from Denmark and the Middle East***. The international ambassadors express that their involvement with the AFD programme has given them a greater understanding of different views and opinions of young people from the other participating countries. Through the intercultural aspect of the programme negative assumptions are confronted and personal connections are made between the ambassadors. Primarily the international ambassadors, but also to some extent the national ambassadors, also express that they have gained a greater understanding of different views and opinions of people in their own country through the AFD programme.

The fourth learning point is the ***ability to work in intercultural settings***. International ambassadors express that by being part of the intercultural AFD programme they have

gained the ability to work in intercultural settings. This ability is gained as ambassadors work closely together with ambassadors from the other participating countries, and hence it is primarily learned through teamwork, planning and facilitation of workshops.

The fifth learning point is the ***ability to teach methods and values of dialogue to others.*** National and international ambassadors alike express that being part of the AFD programme has enabled them to teach others the methods and values of dialogue. This ability is closely connected to the facilitation skills which ambassadors learn, but also to an identification with the project and the internalisation of the dialogical values and behaviours.

Following these five results, the ambassadors express that their motivation for continuing in the programme changes and increases parallel to their involvement. Whereas somewhat personal interests previously drove them, many ambassadors are now driven by a feeling of community and a belief in the dialogical culture which the AFD programme promotes. The motivation hence moves from a primarily personal level to a societal level. Especially the international ambassadors feel a strong sense of ownership towards the programme.

Where ambassadors learn

The international ambassadors generally find the learning environment of the AFD programme fruitful, and they speak very positively about a number of learning spaces within the AFD framework as well as beyond.

Some of the most significant learning spaces of the international AFD framework are to be found within the context of the *intercultural dialogue activities* while others are to be found *in-between and after the phases*.

Within the *intercultural dialogue activities* the non-formal educational space of the training seminar makes up a primary learning space. Here intercultural and participatory aspects have major impacts on the ambassadors. The theoretical and in particular the practical training form the backbone of ambassadors' learning, but the real impact is generated in combination with other learning spaces. The participatory and interactive approach of the AFD programme creates a learning environment for the ambassadors resembling a community of practice. Here the ambassadors, as social beings, learn in situ as they share the practice of conducting and facilitating dialogue. The community feeling is further enhanced through the didactic approach, which allows and encourages ambassadors to create a trustful and personal space. The large amount of personal involvement is a powerful learning experience to some ambassadors, especially related to self-development, while others find it too self-indulging.

Participatory education happens in particular through dialogue exercises, teamwork and facilitation of workshops, which all make up significant learning spaces. Through these, ambassadors learn about the concepts and methods of dialogue, as they are challenged to confront their own assumptions and accept each other's differences. Hence, this is where a large part of the learning points is anchored.

Informal learning takes place primarily during ambassadors' informal socialising with each other. These self-directed learning spaces are of major importance, as they let ambassadors

incorporate dialogue while they build personal intercultural relationships. Spending time outside of the classroom creates an understanding of the other ambassadors' background and culture.

In-between and after the phases are times that holds potentially significant learning spaces. However, the responsibility is to a larger extent placed on the ambassador. Here self-reflection and engagement with the surrounding society, including involvement in the national team, is what secures that the ambassadors' continued learning process.

National ambassadors from both Jordan and Egypt speak positively about the learning spaces involved on the national level and each team point out three significant learning spaces. In Egypt these three learning spaces are the official non-formal training, the informal dialogue circles, and the participatory workshops. In Jordan the three learning spaces are the official training, the monthly meetings, and the workshops. The trainings and the meetings are where ambassadors are exposed to the dialogical values, are taught facilitation and dialogue skills and are given the chance to create a community around practice. The participatory learning space of the workshops exposes the ambassadors to differences in society, which also allow them to develop their dialogical understanding. Furthermore, the work on partnerships and the regional aspect creates significant learning spaces.

Where ambassadors use what they have learned

Ambassadors' everyday lives are not just where ambassadors successfully use what is being learned and gained as part of the AFD programme. They are also one of the most significant informal learning spaces in the ambassadors' learning process.

Ambassadors use dialogue in personal, professional and organisational life, and there are therefore multiple examples of ways in which what is being learned *within* the AFD programme is used in practice *outside* the programme. In all the three spheres, the element used most often and with most success by ambassadors is a dialogical attitude. Some of the Arab ambassadors find dialogue difficult to use in a family setting, but the internalised dialogical skills such as active listening, reflections, and an inclusive worldview can be and is used both in families, with friends, colleagues, clients, managers, patients etc. Dialogue exercises are primarily used in educational situations in both organisational and professional settings, where also facilitation skills are used.

Ambassadors use what they have learned in the AFD programme to open up doors to jobs and organisations. They transfer the methods and culture of dialogue to other organisations that they are active in, and apply it to internal structures to solve or prevent conflicts caused by people not listening to and/or accepting each other's different perspectives.

To sum up, the dialogue skills and dialogical attitude learned through the AFD are by many ambassadors, some with time and to varying degrees, used as an integrated part of their social behaviour within most spheres of their life.

Looking to the future development of the AFD programme ambassadors and stakeholders suggest a strengthening of the continuity of learning and involvement, and particularly on the international level, an increased connection to the societal contexts of the AFD programme.



Ambassadors during dialogue at a training seminar in Denmark

CHAPTER 3

3 THE FOUR PHASES OF AFD

As Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) points out in their analysis of the AFD pilot phase, the concept of intercultural dialogue has long been a buzzword in international politics and intercultural dialogue projects have, in particular since 9/11, sprung up.⁸ Politicians have, inspired by philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas, pointed to dialogue as the way forward when discussing global value clashes, but attempts to examine how dialogue works in practice had rarely been made.

In this light, and with reference to the cartoon crisis, the AFD began as a **pilot project** in 2009. The Ministry of foreign affairs had in 2008, due to the reprinting of the drawings, created a task force to strengthen Danish relations to the Arab world, which the AFD pilot phase was funded through. In corporation between DUF and the Danish Ministry of Foreign affairs it was decided to develop a mini-lab for dialogue between youth from Denmark, Jordan and Egypt. Its objective was not to foster dialogue per se, but to develop 'effective methods for dialogue'. 'Effective dialogue' was here defined as a dialogue that creates a better and more nuanced insight in and understanding of opinions and views of 'the other' – i.e. Danes or Jordanians/Egyptians. One that creates mutual understanding of the underlying factors for these differences, as well as increases the tolerance of a variation in opinions and views.⁹

The pilot project was implemented as a co-operation between the WE Centre in Jordan and the EYF in Egypt. 38 young people from Denmark, Jordan and Egypt were involved in the pilot project and 1450 young people from the three countries participated in various forms of dialogue activities facilitated by the international volunteers.¹⁰

Analysts from DIIS monitored the dialogue activities of the pilot phase, focusing on the impact of the dialogue and the dialogue methods on participants in the dialogue activities. Thus, it was not a classic project evaluation nor did it focus on the impact on the ambassadors for dialogue themselves.

The project's impact upon participants was evaluated positively. DIIS's analysis detected a need for dialogue among the participants and concluded that in all three countries, there was a 'clear tendency that respondents felt more sympathy for and a closer kinship to youth from Denmark and Egypt/Jordan respectively after the activity'. The study defined three determining factors for this result:

⁸ E.g. the EU funded project of the Anna Lindh Foundation, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and national programmes such as DAPP.

⁹ DIIS 2010, DUF 2010

¹⁰ DUF 2010

- That participants gained concrete new insights impacting their perception of ‘the other’.
- Nonverbal impressions - the personal meeting with the ambassadors of different nationalities.
- The ambassadors’ combination of interactive methods, openness and willingness to share private experiences and attitudes in the creation of a space for dialogue characterized by honesty and trust.¹¹

Based on the DIIS’ project monitoring and research, inputs from the ambassadors and the overall ‘testing of effectiveness of different models of dialogue’, the AFD project was continuously developed and a set of dialogue-principles defined. Departing from the concepts and principles of dialogue developed in the pilot project, a **second phase** was implemented in 2010-2011. A majority of the participating ambassadors of the pilot project remained engaged in the second phase while the rest of the 27 ambassadors were (re)selected.

The criteria for selecting new ambassadors have gradually developed, and today focus on ambassadors’ current competences as well as potentials for development – particularly in regards to some criteria. Ambassadors are selected based on the following criteria:

- Between 18-30 years old
- English language skills
- Basic dialogical skills – focus on potential
- Dialogical understanding – focus on potential
- Team working skills
- Facilitations skills
- Openness and willingness to learn and develop
- Active member of a youth organisation/initiative/movement
- Personality - good social skills, positive attitude and trustworthy
- Diversity in terms of nationality, religion, culture, gender and organisations¹²

Thus, one team of ambassadors consist of seven Jordanians, seven Egyptians and 14 Danes, including seven with Muslim and/or Arabic background. Due to young women having ‘fewer opportunities in the countries of corporation’, at least 50% of the ambassadors must be women¹³ - in fact the second phase had an overrepresentation of women.¹⁴ Since the third phase the recruitment process has included ‘boot camps’, at which ambassadors are interviewed by volunteer trainers and members of the coordinating team, are engaged in various dialogue exercises and given small facilitation tasks. Ambassadors are selected on the basis of their overall performance.

¹¹ DIIS 2010: 4-5

¹² DUF 2014, International ambassadors comment positively on the selection of ambassadors.

¹³ DUF 2010: 12

¹⁴ DUF 2012

The second phase had as its main objective ‘to create nuanced insight and mutual understanding of different views between young people in Jordan, Egypt and Denmark in order to break down prejudices and misunderstandings.’¹⁵ This was done by training the ambassadors in dialogue tools and facilitation skills and conducting dialogue activities with young people at universities and high schools in the three countries, facilitated by the ambassadors. The primary target group was, and still is, defined as dual, consisting of both the large number of participants of the dialogue activities, as well as the smaller group of ambassadors for dialogue.

Furthermore the second phase focused on searching for ways to ‘anchor’ the dialogue methods in the ambassadors’ own organizations – how they could act as ‘agents of change’. To make the most of the skills and knowledge obtained as part of the project, an aim of the project was to provide ambassadors with ‘the ability to teach others in the methods of dialogue, in order for them to not only deliver dialogue within the AFD activities, but also deliver training to others on how to use the dialogue methods.’¹⁶

In 2012-2013 a **third phase** was implemented, with a strengthened focus on anchoring the developed dialogue methods in various organizations and institutional contexts. The main objective remained an enhanced Danish-Arab understanding.

While the focus on anchoring previously took form as a call to ambassadors to implement dialogue in their own organisations, the form in phase three became more official. In 2012 the AFD launched national teams in Egypt and Jordan, running from the EYF and WE Centre. International ambassadors from phase two took part in the recruitment process of the first national teams, and many national ambassadors became part of AFD due to participating in intercultural dialogue workshops facilitated as part of the international programme. National ambassadors are trained separately from the international team. The international ambassadors for dialogue take part in the training and aim to transfer new knowledge after every international seminar.

As a means to enhance the effectiveness of the anchoring of methods, the writing of a dialogue handbook began in 2011, during the second phase. The book sat out as a collaborative project, gathering the interactive methods, exercises and principles of dialogue as well as experiences with workshop facilitation used and developed (also by the ambassadors themselves) within the framework of the AFD programme. *The Dialogue Handbook* was finalised and published in 2012 in corporation with the Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution, during the third phase. The handbook is published in Danish, English and Arabic and outlines the AFD approach to and understanding of dialogue on a theoretical and practical level. With its format the book intends to enable others to use and benefit from the methods and principles of the AFD programme.¹⁷ The handbook currently acts as the backbone and curriculum of the international AFD programme in terms of the taught theoretical and practical approach to dialogue.

¹⁵ DUF 2010: 2

¹⁶ DUF 2010: 2

¹⁷ DUF 2012

Furthermore, to enhance the sustainability of the programme, ambassadors from phase two were *trained as trainers* in spring 2012. During the first phases two professional trainers¹⁸ were responsible for the content and facilitation of sessions at the training seminars. This structure was changed, when eight ambassadors were made junior trainers, and, with the support of one of the previous trainers, independently trained and mentored the new team of international ambassadors of phase three. Upon evaluation it was decided to split the responsibility and bring back both senior trainers, who were during phase four responsible for the teaching of the seminar together with the five remaining junior trainers.

In its **fourth and recently finished phase**, running from 2014-2015, the Danish-Arab understanding remains essential, but focus has shifted further towards fostering a dialogical culture and bridging internal divides among youth internally in Jordan and Egypt – and, in the longer run, in the MENA region more broadly. For the first time in the programme's history, the official aim of the programme echoes both of the DAPPs main objectives; firstly to 'contribute to reform and democratization processes and bridge internal divides among youth in the MENA region' and secondly, to 'strengthen partnerships and foster mutual understanding between youth and youth organizations in Denmark and the MENA region.'¹⁹

This increased focus on fostering dialogue *internally* in the participating countries follows the current situation in the MENA region, causing societal division and confrontations between different groupings. As formulated in DUFs Rolling Plan for 2016 'the Arab Winter has underlined and fuelled the need to enhance mutual understanding between youth across ethnic, religious, ideological and other divides in MENA, in order to counter polarization, prevent conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence; *including* as a means to and precondition for sustainable and meaningful reform and democratization processes in MENA.' Hence, in 2016 DUF will further upscale the AFD programme.²⁰

In Egypt the political situation has contributed to an increased polarization at both the political and societal level, which according to DUF calls for dialogue between the groupings of Egyptian society. Furthermore did DUF in 2013-2014 experience a boom in dialogue activities in Egypt facilitated by EYF. In the narrowing space for civil society organizations to operate in, this indicates to DUF an increasing need for the niche 'product' they have to offer.

In addition to the *national* focus, *regional* dialogue seminars have taken place and DUF strives to create a higher degree of synergy between the AFD and other elements of the MENA-DK Youth Programme. DUF in particular aims to use the ambassadors more actively in political networks, where the creation of a neutral space is needed.²¹

During the fourth phase initiative has been taken to 'assess and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the programme vis-à-vis its intentions and objectives' qua this very impact

¹⁸ During the pilot phase ambassadors were taught conflict resolution, rhetoric and forum theatre by three trainers. Based on evaluation it was decided by DUF to keep only the focus on two of the topics – rhetoric and conflict resolution – which resulted in two of the trainers, Gry Guldberg and Jesper Bastholm Munk, staying in the programme.

¹⁹ DUF 2013

²⁰ DUF 2015b: 3

²¹ DUF 2015a

study, which will guide the implementation and further development of the programme in 2016-2017. Furthermore DUF is currently working on an AFD website intended to boost the overall impact and outreach of the program and become an interactive hub of knowledge for dialogue facilitators – particularly in the MENA region. The website will contain an updated online version of the Dialogue Handbook, including new dialogue exercises and methodologies developed within the framework of the programme since 2012.

In summer 2015 a group of Danish international ambassadors launched a new independent, national initiative in Denmark named Dialogik. They are receiving support from Danish Centre for Conflict Solution and DUF and are currently in a developing phase.



Ambassadors for Dialogue in Denmark

CHAPTER 4

4 INDIVIDUAL AMBASSADORS' LEARNING JOURNEYS

This chapter presents a selection of individual ambassadors learning journeys. Included here are three *international* ambassadors – one from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark respectively – and two *national* ambassadors – one from Jordan and one from Egypt. The aim of this chapter is to present examples of what ambassadors learned and gained individually as a result of being part of the AFD programme, how they have been able to apply it in their personal lives, at work and with other organisations, and lastly what significant changes it has led to in their lives.

One objective of this chapter is to tell a number of success stories, which has been leading in the selection of individuals chosen as examples. Hence, not all ambassadors have experienced changes in their lives as big as the ones presented in this chapter. There were, however, many good examples to choose from. Due to this objective, you will find that the majority of the ambassadors chosen as examples here have been involved in the AFD programme for a number of years - or were involved a number of years back. This is due to a clear tendency among the respondents followed by the simple notion that those getting involved recently, have not yet had the time to let the things learned sink in and apply them in their lives outside of the AFD, and thus there are fewer significant changes to track at this point. Furthermore, it has been a priority to present examples of both male and female ambassadors.

4.1 Khalid - International Ambassador from Jordan

Khalid is 24 years old and was an international ambassador in phase 2 (2010-2011). Before joining AFD, Khalid was struggling with the issue of how to enter into dialogue with his immediate surroundings. It was during a time of major conflicts and social debates, and Khalid experienced himself having progressive thoughts that he wanted to share with others. However, he was missing the tools to transfer his ideas of tolerance, acceptance of others, freedom of speech etc. He was experiencing that even though his beliefs were deep, he was not able to reach his friends or family as he did not possess the right approach. Therefore, when he saw the announcement online about AFD recruiting international ambassadors, he was interested in gaining the experience.

Khalid was accepted and took part in the training seminars in the three countries. His expectations weren't very high, as he thought that a programme of such 'a big mixture' would lose its sense of contextual needs. Due to the cultural differences between Jordan, Egypt and Denmark he was expecting that learning about approaches applicable for everyone would be too vague, and not at all deep and effective. Quickly he found himself proven wrong. Khalid found that the informal education in dialogue, the element of practicing the taught tools and the process of refining them in order to be more efficient or more sensitive

to the audience taught him a lot of life skills. Khalid also took part in the writing of the *Dialogue Handbook*.

On a personal level, Khalid now considers dialogue part of his lifestyle. He calls participating in AFD a life changing experience. Being exposed to new concepts made him realise things about himself, and he feels thankful towards the project for the changes it has made in his life. Due to concepts, ideas and approaches, which could be applied in his life, Khalid made a lot of big decisions, which have largely shaped his life:

Firstly, he shifted his studies from medicine to political science, which has enabled him to pursue a career in his current field. Khalid started out working on the participatory level, but through the programme he learned that changes in behaviour and perspectives can also happen in a combined methodology with both bottom up and top down approaches. This has caused him to shift his focus more towards policy work. Previously, he was mostly focused on how to change the thoughts of people around him, but by realizing that the frameworks of society are hindering the change in perspectives, he is now working towards changing the policy making of the central government and parliament. He currently works as the country director for an international organisation focusing on democratization and decentralisation in Jordan, among other countries, and has been able to implement elements of dialogue learned from the AFD.

In a political landscape dominated by debates, winners and losers, Khalid has been able to use concrete tools from the AFD when working with parliamentarians on decentralisation. Through using a formalised variation of the talking stick at a workshop for parliamentarians of conflicting opinions regarding the Jordanian voting system, Khalid managed to create increased understanding between those wanting a majoritarian and a proportional voting system. This led to a compromise, which in his own words has increased the representation of 'at least three million people in Jordan who cast votes'.

Secondly, being part of AFD has provided Khalid with approaches to prepare his family and friends to his coming out as homosexual. He considers this life saving, due to the amount of violence directed towards homosexual persons in Jordan, and feels thankful towards the project for not having to encounter this or lose his family connection. Through the programme he learned how to gradually start a dialogue about the topic before informing his family about his sexuality and how to be culturally sensible. After applying this approach for a while, he recently reached a level where he felt he had prepared his family sufficiently for the shocking news. The result has been successful, and his family does not fear him anymore. Since this is not the case in mainstream Jordan, Khalid is now working on opening the social debate about homosexuality in Jordan through public events, the writing of a magazine and campaigns for homosexual rights.

Since ending his international involvement in 2011 Khalid has been part of the national Jordanian AFD team, and he continues to facilitate workshops and events for AFD.

4.2 Salma - International Ambassador from Egypt

Salma is 28 years old and was an international ambassador in the pilot phase and phase 2 (2009-2011). She is from a city in the northern Egypt/Alexandria and in 2009 volunteered at

the library, where she encountered many different nationalities as part of the conference department. She took an interest in the diversity of the visitors, and how their various backgrounds affected how they would communicate and connect to each other. Therefore, when she received an email about the AFD programme, she was interested and applied.

Her expectations towards the programme was that it would be 'like any other project' – that she would join for one year and then go back to normal. But, as she puts it 'once you become an ambassador, you don't get out.' Although Salma no longer conducts workshops or is officially involved with the AFD, to this day, she still considers herself an ambassador for dialogue. The first thing about the programme that surprised Salma, was that she was not just participating in workshops, but also conducting them, and in this way practicing her knowledge, in what she finds the best possible way. Secondly, she found that being placed in a diverse, intercultural group taught her about communication and to overcome the challenges that emerged as a result of their diversity.

It was Salma's first encounter with international projects and she felt strange travelling outside Egypt. While she had previously felt comfortable having *discussions* in Egypt, she left her comfort zone as she left the country. Here, in a different environment, surrounded by different people and talking about different issues – sometimes topics that she didn't even talk to her family about, or that are considered taboo in Egypt – her understanding of dialogue shifted towards including certain principles and attitude rather than just *conversing*. Through exercises such as the Corner Game, she started to understand different point of views, see different perspectives and to have an open mind, in order to understand and see how you feel yourself – even when uncomfortable talking about certain issues. As she returned to Egypt, Salma found that she began to see things differently; she started talking more about politics, started questioning things in society that she used to take for granted and started addressing issues and problems that weren't talked about.

By the end of phase two, in 2012, Salma applied to be a trainer but was not selected. She participated in a national tour, where she, together with the coordinator and another ambassador, visited 11 different locations in Egypt to recruit the national team. She did not herself become a part of the new national team and left the programme. However that same year she spoke on the role of youth in the revolution at the UN Alliance conference in Kabul. Here she had her first experience of applying the values and principles of dialogue to another setting; a discussion between Palestinians and Israelis about the two state solution. In this political setting, she found an honest attempt of acceptance and trying to see things from an Israeli perspective fruitful. Since, she has been able to apply dialogue to initiatives and organisations, where she would be asked to do a short dialogue session - using the talking stick or mind swap - when teamwork became challenging.

In her private life Salma has used a dialogical approach to come to an understanding with her parents about her studying in the U.S.A., although they were opposed to the idea in the beginning. After a lot of arguments Salma sat her parents down with a cup of tea and they each laid out their fears and perspectives until every worst case scenario and possible solution had been talked through. Salma find that being part of AFD has shaped her personality: it has made her a better listener, less confrontational, more understanding of other people's perspectives and able to see behind the immediate surface.

Salmas has since travelled to multiple countries. She currently lives abroad and works with an international company.

4.3 Marie - International Ambassador from Denmark

Marie is 25 years old and was an international ambassador in phase 2 (2010-2011), after which she became a junior trainer. In 2010, Marie was active in the Danish Red Cross Youth, through which she received an email about the AFD. Her motivation for applying was very personal; she has a family where they fight and yell a lot and wanted to find a different way to solve conflicts and communicate. Also, she had just returned from a youth-to-youth programme in Uganda and had a strong interest in the Middle East. In 2012 Marie was asked if she was interested in becoming a trainer and was selected among the interested ambassadors. She is currently active in both the international and national work and study Global Development at the university.

Marie describes her learning journey as being a curve, where she felt herself moving up for a long while. She was excited about e.g. understanding to listen actively, to have a feeling that having a conversation means something, and she felt that she was being understood while understanding others. Then suddenly, at the end of phase 2, the curve dropped for Marie and she 'hit a wall'. She thought she had come a long way, but due to a conflict in her team, she suddenly thought: "I don't understand anything". While she believed she was doing everything in the Dialogue Handbook, her teammates didn't think she was listening and being dialogical. After a year and a half, the dialogue was not working at all and she felt 'dragged back'. This made her realise that dialogue isn't easy, and that there is more to it than she thought at first. It changed her attitude and she became more humble in her approach. While, in the beginning, Marie was willing to let herself be moved in all directions, she has now, years later, reached a point where she is well aware of her own standing points and limits, and where she knows what values she cannot compromise with. She describes her current learning stage as 'exploring what it is dialogue can, and who I am in it.' Marie says that she still keep learning things about herself, about the project, the people in it, and how to navigate it. She still keeps finding out what dialogue can do, and is still amazed and surprised of how much this is. Yet, as Marie says, there is no 'magic dialogue' where 'we all agree on everything and we're just a lot of peace, love and harmony'. Dialogue does not erase all divides and differences, it just 'makes it much easier to work with and see the positive sides'.

Marie is using what she has gained from being in the AFD in her private life, where she often gets comments on her dialogical way of asking questions and good listening skills, as well as at work, in other organisations and at university. Here she has used the talking stick to create a better group dynamic.

A new project sprung up from the AFD in 2011, which Marie was part of initiating. The project aims to create more dialogue and less violence in Zimbabwean politics, by training youth volunteers in dialogue. The training is based on the dialogue handbook and conducted by international ambassadors. Other international ambassadors are now running this initiative.

Marie is currently part of a new national initiative called Dialogik, which is inspired by the national work going on in Egypt and Jordan. For years she and other international ambassadors have wanted to do more in Denmark, so recently, with the support of DUF, this new initiative was established. The objective of Dialogik is to foster a dialogical culture in Denmark, by facilitating workshops and other dialogue activities throughout the country as well as contribute to the spreading of dialogical principles in the public debate.²² Marie and the rest of the people involved in Dialogik want to train a national team and keep upgrading their own knowledge. There is a demand for dialogue workshops in Denmark, which is not currently being met due to a shortage of ambassadors. Marie recently participated at Folkemødet (The People's Political Festival) for DUF, creating dialogue and spreading awareness. She has big dreams for AFD and would like to see it as a social movement spreading with branches everywhere.

4.4 Omar - National Ambassador from Egypt

Omar is 23 years old and has been part of the Egyptian national team since it started in 2012. At that time Omar was responsible for a student union group at a university in Cairo and the coordination of a dialogue workshop, conducted by the international ambassadors during an international seminar. Omar participated in the workshop at the university, where he was involved in a heated discussion about religion. At first Omar was unable to accept one of the other workshop participants' opposing view on the topic, but, as Omar says, 'by the end of the workshop I was able to hear the person in front of me, and understand why he would have an opposing view. This made me think; ok, there is something different about this approach, and I need to know more about it.'

The tool used to reach this point was the 'talking stick',²³ which made Omar say to himself: *'how did this happen? Is this really possible? Ok, I really want to learn this. I want to use it personally, and I want to convey it to other people.'* Thus, Omar's motivation for joining the AFD took departure in a situation where he personally experienced that dialogue was working, curiosity and a budding belief in the idea of dialogue, followed by his wish to pass this on to others.

Due to the workshop, Omar became involved with the AFD and started working with the Egyptian management on the establishment of a national team. Omar was already involved in a couple of other projects when he joined, and thus expected AFD to be similar to these: he expected to learn some skills, dialogue tools and acquire new knowledge. Omar did learn facilitation skills, organizational and coordination skills, and how to perform a needs assessment, but hadn't imagined learning as much as he did about how valuable dialogue is, how to see beyond the tip of the 'iceberg' when dealing with a person, and how to apply dialogue.

Particularly during the first 6 months of Omar's involvement in the programme he struggled with the gap between *understanding* and being able to *apply* the concept and principles of

²² https://www.facebook.com/Dialogik-697659157007353/info/?tab=page_info

²³ The talking stick as a tool and method will be described in chapter 6.

dialogue while still not having *internalised* the values pertaining to dialogue. Omar knew about the importance of respect and awareness of other people and was even able to convey his knowledge to others, but as he puts it: 'I just couldn't apply it'. Working towards becoming a more *dialogical person* – defined as 'someone who has internalized the values that pertain to dialogue, so that they become an inherent part of that person – a person that really lives in a permanent state of dialogue' – he practices dialogue, uses the tools, conducts workshops, observes reactions, listens to participants and monitors himself. Omar says: 'To me the real test of when I can call myself dialogical is when I am able to feel at peace with not agreeing with the person I'm talking to.'

Omar has through the values of the AFD programme developed his personality, gained greater self-awareness and partly changed his professional career. Outside of the AFD programme Omar has used dialogical tools and methods both in the student unions at university, and with much more difficulty, in the military service he is currently doing. He is still working on how to use dialogue with the people close to him – e.g. his parents. He finds this the hardest, as they do not acknowledging the importance of listening.

Omar has previously been coordinator of the national team and now works as part of the management of the AFD in Egypt. He also does training on human development and work with the ministry of youth on projects related to skills training of youth.

4.5 Hussein - National Ambassador from Jordan

Hussein is 22 years old and has been part of the Jordanian national team since 2012. He is from a governorate in the eastern part of Jordan and is in his final year of studying political science. In 2012 Hussein was active in another civil society organisation, through which he attended a workshop on popular participation conducted by the international ambassadors. The workshop included games and was not theoretical, which was a new experience to Hussein. To talk about dialogue was at this point new in Jordan and Hussein felt very inspired by the presentation and methodology of one of the trainers in particular. Hussein immediately wanted to join the AFD programme. When, a few months later, the national team opened up for applications, Hussein applied and was, to his own excitement, accepted. Participants had been chosen from all the 12 governorates in Jordan and coming from an area where 'the available resources are extremely basic' Hussein felt that receiving this offer to attend the training of trainers (TOT) was 'a big thing.'

Hussein at first wasn't comfortable in the training, as he felt that all the other participants were 'extremely competent'. Between the three training seminars, which happened a few months apart, Hussein felt he was learning and changing quickly. He felt the impact the training had on his university and by the end of the trainings he felt that he had 'acquired a dialogical identity' and now was that 'agent of change in the society' that he had aspired to be.

Looking back, Hussein says that he was not a dialogical person before joining AFD programme and that his understanding was that a dialogue was similar to a discussion. He would listen to people, but have his answers ready and always think his opinion to be the right one. After learning about dialogue, he realised that it was totally different from his

previous understanding and not easy at all – especially because you have to change the understanding that you've grown up with. Hussein today considers the AFD programme part of his personality. He is now a good listener and 'willing to change his opinion or ideas through a dialogue with any person who offers a convincing and realistic argument'. He has become 'quite flexible'. On a personal level Hussein has benefitted by this change in personality; by using these acquired abilities in a dialogue with his parents he has, after several years of studies, managed to change his university specialisation from engineering to political science. Due to his use of dialogue on a personal level, Hussein is now goes under the name 'Hussein Dialogical'.

On a societal level, Hussein believes he, through giving workshops locally, has managed to contribute to some kind of change in the prevailing culture of the conservative and poorly educated local community as well at his university, where since 2012 the level of youth work has increased and the level of violence decreased. Hussein has been able to use what he has learned as a national ambassador in various university initiatives, one of them focusing on reducing violence at universities through dialogue.

To Hussein the greatest motivational factor and benefit of the AFD programme is that he gets to be an inspiration for others to change. He uses dialogue as a tool to motivate people to participate in development work, and, in the same spirit, when losing motivation, Hussein thinks back upon two particular trainers, who he has found particularly inspiring, and then 'try to repeat the same inspirational spirit in my sessions'.

Today, three years later, Hussein still feels himself moving forward. Through practice, he expects to reach a deeper understanding of dialogue and to become even better at engaging in dialogue. Knowing more about dialogue has made Hussein smile and laugh more, because as he says; 'dialogue is all about happiness, about being cheerful when talking to people.'

Hussein has conducted a number of workshops on dialogue at the university, in partnership with an organisation working on Syrian/Jordanian co-existence and conflict management, as well as several other organisations and training programmes. He often experiences positive feedback on his dialogical way of training, and whenever Hussein encounters a societal initiative he tries to include the topic of dialogue. Due to his involvement in the AFD, Hussein has been given the chance to work with the USAID conducting dialogue sessions on gender-based violence.

Hussein has high ambitions for the AFD programme in terms of its size, outreach and specialisation in fields such as politics. His ambition is to establish Ambassadors for Peace, which through the dialogue approach could convey the true nature of Islam to the 'other'. A project he finds particularly important due to the current situation in the Arab world – including radical groups such as ISIS.



Ambassadors for Dialogue at a training seminar in Denmark

CHAPTER 5

5 AMBASSADORS' COLLECTIVE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

So if we look at it as a learning journey from when we started as ambassadors until now 2015 - so that's the learning journey. But in fact that learning journey is just a smaller part of a bigger learning journey - life. And that kind of makes more sense to me; that it is just a part of learning about everything in life. Because even while I was in ... the ADF project, I was still learning from other places. I wasn't just in this bubble and learning sometimes in Jordan and in Egypt - we were practically in bubbles. We're still being affected by everything around us, and it is not necessarily connected to the project, but the project really gave me some tools, no not tools or principles, lenses. It gave me some lenses to look at the world around me and my own personal world inside myself. The project gave me some lenses to look at it in a different way, and to look at it through different lenses than I would usually look through. So it's just a small part of a large journey that is life.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

Following the *individual* stories presented in chapter 4, this chapter provides a synthesized overview of what the Ambassadors for Dialogue *collectively* learned and how they developed as part of the programme. Hence, the chapter focuses on the *results* of the AFD programme.

This focus on *results* may give connotations to an understanding of learning as a product – a change in behaviour, an outcome or an end product of a learning process that has been completed. However, this impact study rather applies an understanding of learning as a continuous process – as *lifelong learning* as Tarek describes it in the above quote. In this context the AFD is just a part of this 'bigger learning journey'. Parts of what the ambassadors learn in the AFD programme take form as skills, dialogue methods and other 'acquisitions', which can be defined as something somehow external to the learner - more a matter of 'know that' than 'know how'.²⁴ But the majority of what is learned is precisely this kind of 'know how'. They are not possessions but rather personal, internal aspects of learning that are incorporated into the way the ambassadors' view and act in the world.²⁵ They are, as Tarek says, 'lenses' to look through. Hence, the descriptions of what the ambassadors have learned through the programme should be seen and understood as their own, current perceptions of a continuous learning process.

The chapter follows the structure of the international ambassadors' engagement with the AFD programme. Thus, it sets out by examining the ambassadors' initial motivations for joining the programme as well as their expectations pertaining to the learning experience.

²⁴ Ryle 1949: 58

²⁵ Smith 2003

5.1 Motivations, Expectations and Immediate Reactions to the AFD Programme

While the ways in which the ambassadors got to know about the AFD programme varies – some were headhunted by coordinators, some were invited by friends already in the programme, some saw a Facebook post, others received an email – the overall tendency among them all is that they knew very little beforehand about what was going to happen in the programme, and they had very few expectations pertaining to the learning that was to take place. Yet, they unanimously say that the experience was nothing like what they expected – this being meant in the most positive sense.

As the individual learning journeys in chapter 4 exemplifies, the motivations of the ambassadors for joining the AFD programme varies. There is a particular difference between motivations of the international and the national ambassadors, as the national and international level of the programmes are of very different nature. However, the overall motivation for all ambassadors joining is a curiosity to know more about dialogue.

Among the *international ambassadors* the motivations for joining has changed some over the course of the three included phases. During the early phases the cartoon controversy, boycott of Danish products in the Arab countries and a curiosity about this situation motivated many ambassadors. While some of the ambassadors of the later phases are still motivated by the cartoon controversy, other motives, such as a general interest in the Middle East/West and the belief in dialogue, are more prevailing.

Several of the *international ambassadors from Jordan* were already involved with the WE Centre and found out about the AFD programme via the Facebook page. Several of the ambassadors from the early phases received invitations to participate directly from the country coordinator. Their motives for joining the international programme were:

- A need for dialogue in society
- An interest in Danish culture due to the cartoons and boycotting of Danish products
- An interest in the role of the media due to the cartoon crisis
- The international aspect and the chance to travel
- Meeting other volunteers from other countries
- Learning skills and how to do dialogue
- Participating in cross-cultural understanding

The Jordanian ambassadors did not know exactly what the programme was about, but they had vague expectations to learn about dialogue and 'how to talk to friends and family', but also to understand the gap between the East and the West. One thought it was going to be a 'chatting programme', much like a reading club. They knew they were going to travel, share experiences and thoughts, and talk about cultures. While ambassadors recall that the information given to them before their involvement included the outcome of the AFD, the methods and process was not clear to them, and the ambassadors did not expect to be trained as facilitators and do workshops. Hence, the first days of AFD training were very surprising, and they soon found that this was no 'chatting session'. It can be discussed

whether it would be useful to give potential ambassadors more accurate and detailed information on the content of the programme. However, an ambassador from phase four finds the vague information positive: she would have found it 'too scary' and would not have applied to the programme, had she known that she was to facilitate workshops.

The *international ambassadors from Egypt* came in contact with the programme by email, personal contacts and the country coordinator. They were motivated by:

- Cultural exchange
- The regional perspective
- Communication internationally
- Learning about dialogue and how to be dialogical
- The opportunity to travel to Denmark
- Understanding the Danish culture due to the cartoon crisis
- An interest in bridging the gap between different cultures in Denmark and the Middle East

The Egyptian ambassadors had, like the Jordanians, very few and vague expectations about the programme and dialogue itself. They all expected to learn something new, travel abroad and meet new people. But while one Egyptian ambassador expected to understand the cartoon crisis, another expected to learn a lot about theory in intercultural learning, and a third expected to do a lot of activities. To their surprise, they found that AFD more than any of these things was about discovering and working on themselves. An ambassador says:

In the beginning I thought just about transmitting my beliefs and my ideas about Egypt and Islam to people who had assumptions. I didn't think about the other way that I was also going to receive, or going to change myself.

Sofia, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

Also the Egyptian ambassadors were surprised about the amount of facilitation – or 'work on the ground' as one calls it - included in the programme.

Many of the *international ambassadors from Denmark* were, previous to their engagement with the AFD, active in other DUF activities. Some came from political youth organisations such as Social Democratic Youth of Denmark and Social Liberal Youth of Denmark, while others were active in the scouts and ethnic minority youth organisations. Ambassadors were motivated by:

- A belief in dialogue
- A need for dialogue due to the cartoon crisis
- Contributing to create better understanding between the youth in the East and the West
- The practical approach and the idea of 'doing something'
- Frustration with the political sphere in Denmark
- An alternative way to communicate and solve conflicts

- An interest in the Middle East and Middle Eastern culture
- The opportunity to travel to the Middle East
- Gaining concrete tools of mediation
- Creating a link between dialogue and issues in Denmark

Like the other international ambassadors, the Danish ambassadors had very unclear expectations about the programme. They expected to meet new people *‘in a way that creates something’*, as one ambassador puts it. The intercultural aspect played a large role but like the other international ambassadors the Danes did not expect to do workshops, nor did they have a clear idea about what a workshop would entail. The ambassadors do not think it would have been better, had they know more about the content, as it gives a feeling of being able to co-create the content.

Among the *national ambassadors in Jordan*, the reputation of the WE Centre was a driving factor for their initial involvement in the AFD. The centre is well known in the volunteer environment for being a ‘trusted and well-reputed’ centre, which takes good care of their volunteers and ‘does not abandon them after the training’.²⁶ Several national ambassadors belong to the volunteer environment and were already involved in other activities run by the centre, alongside an impressive number of initiatives with other organisations. The second motivational factor was the topic of dialogue itself, which there was an increasing talk about, starting with the university violence in Jordan in 2010-2011 and continuing with the Arab Spring. Other motivations were to learn about facilitation. The national Jordanian ambassadors share a great enthusiasm about being selected for the programme, and many see it as a big opportunity.

While the ambassadors expected to learn about dialogue, they were surprised to find the programme different from anything they had previously encountered. They expected an ‘average training’ where information is delivered over a few hours or days; they would take some notes and be awarded a certificate. Instead, as Hussein describes it in chapter 4, they experienced a training programme with a large focus on practicing dialogue and a dynamic structure, which to some caused a ‘quantum leap’ in both their understanding of dialogue and general view on training sessions.²⁷ As two ambassadors describes it:

I was expecting a session about dialogue – where someone would just explain what dialogue is. But when I joined the Training of Trainers, I was surprised that it was not only about dialogue itself, but about delivering the dialogue, whether I had been convinced by it, whether I understood it, and how I convince others, how I have been influenced by them and influenced them myself.

Youssef, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

My aim in joining the programme was only to learn about dialogue and then start teaching it... but I was surprised to find out that no one reaches perfection in delivering training sessions. We learn every day. ... It has added a lot of things to me as an individual... I didn’t just learn about dialogue, and this made me feel that I learned more than what I had expected.

Amir, national ambassador in Jordan since 2014

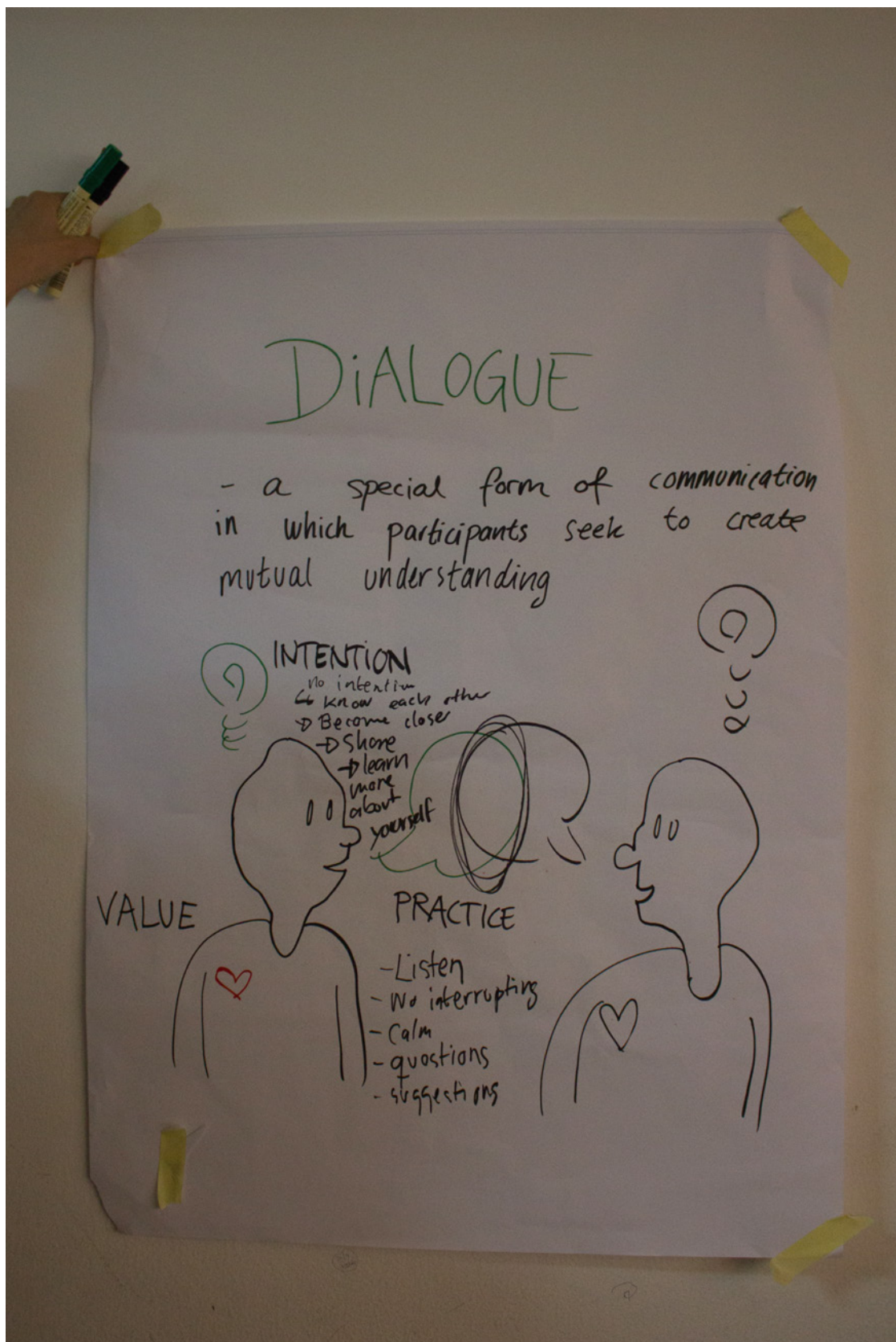
²⁶ Noor, national ambassador from Jordan

²⁷ Youssef, national ambassador from Jordan

Among the *national ambassadors in Egypt* the main motivational factor was again the topic of dialogue, deriving from them generally having a bit more information about the programme and its methodologies. Hence, ambassadors were motivated by the dialogical idea and the distinct interactive approach, which some had experienced as participants in workshops. Due to the revolution and the anger that has followed many saw the need of dialogue in society. Some were impressed with the dialogical idea of being open-minded and accepting other's point of view. Some had seen the effect on friends, who were previously 'ill tempered' but through the programme had changed behaviour. Some expected to learn to listen to others and wanted to create a change in themselves to be able to create change in society. Others hoped to benefit personally from improving in dialogue and learn facilitation skills. An ambassador who was recruited through an AFD workshop says:

When I attended the session before I became one of the ambassadors, I felt that the idea was nice, but to some extent surreal and that I will never achieve that (being dialogical), but I enjoyed the session and learned from it. When I joined ... I was very far from being dialogical. I had many shortcomings in relation to being dialogical and where I am today show that I have come a long way. When I joined the project and did the Training of Facilitators I imagined that when being an ambassador I will listen to others and be a good "talker". After a year and a half, I found that even in my life outside the project, I have become a good listener, I am able to put myself in the others' shoes, give excuses and avoid putting others in boxes. So it has indeed made a big difference.

Rather than learning to be good and convincing 'talkers' ambassadors in general learned to be good listeners and gained a deeper understanding of the concept of dialogue.



Definition of dialogue used at workshop conducted in Egypt

5.2 A Developed Understanding of Dialogue

Fulfilling what must be considered a main objective of any dialogue programme, all ambassadors, both national and international, express that they due to their involvement in the AFD programme have developed a 'different', 'deeper', 'better' and overall new understanding of dialogue. This is supported by the survey among the international ambassadors, which shows that all 30 respondents agree that being part of the AFD programme has given them a deeper understanding of the concept, meaning and potentials of dialogue.²⁸

When entering the programme, ambassadors may like the idea of dialogue, but aside from very few ambassadors, they do not have a clear understanding of the word neither of dialogue as a method. As Rami from Egypt says:

When I first started the project I thought dialogue was a good thing and all that stuff, but I did not know how much you can do with dialogue.

Rami, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2

Most ambassadors enter the programme with an undefined understanding of dialogue – that there is no specific difference between 'conversation', 'talk', 'debate', 'discussion' and 'dialogue'. Through the programme ambassadors gain an understanding of the difference between the three terms discussion, debate and dialogue, and learn how to consciously choose which form of communication they want to use. At the core of ambassadors' understanding of dialogue are the basic principles, described in The Dialogue Handbook; trust, openness, honesty and equality, and the definition used by AFD:

*Dialogue is a special form of communication, in which participants seek to actively create greater mutual understanding and deeper insight.*²⁹

International ambassadors describe their changed and developed understanding of dialogue in this way:

I thought dialogue was just a conversation, a really nice conversation, a really friendly conversation. But after three days (of training) we did a play about smoking, one showing dialogue and one not showing dialogue. ... So for me, when I saw these things in action, I got what dialogue is for the first time. It is like accepting people whatever they are, and whatever they are from.

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4

Well, I learned in public school that dialogue is just two people talking, the opposite of monologue where only one person is talking. So I had a very, very simple understanding of what dialogue actually was, and I guess I found out that it was actually so much more than that.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

²⁸ 26 respondents 'completely agree' while 4 'somewhat agree'.

²⁹ The Dialogue Handbook 2012: 18

It's about accepting that there are other views than yours, and it's ok that people have other views. And when you look at the aim of the project, it is to build bridges between the different countries, the youth in the different countries. And I feel that when I go out and make workshops that I do exactly that. Because, there are so many in the Middle East that have so many ideas of what a thing is, and who a thing is and so on and so on – especially with the Mohammed crisis. And there's a lot of resistance towards Danes. And we go there and have a dialogue where we show who we are, and they show who they are. We find that common ground somehow, but we still accept – not everyone – but my personal aim is for people to accept that we are different from them and they are different from us, but we can still sit down and have a talk about it.

Heba, international ambassador from Denmark since 2014

Before joining the project it was a bit shallow, my understanding of dialogue, it was not so in-depth. It was like, shallow, you're not going in depths to know the one who's in front of you, to understand where he's coming from. I didn't think all these things before I joined the project. Maybe like, before joining the project I was a bit judgemental. I didn't consider certain ideas that could be changed; my understanding of dialogue, your values. Yes, it became more deep when I joined the project.

Magdi, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

Just getting people to learn that there is nothing right or wrong that's the main core of dialogue. I used to be one of the people who don't accept other points of view. My point of view is the only correct one, nobody else is correct. I'm the only one who is correct. But then I've learned through dialogue, knowing how to accept other people's point of view. You have to see, brain switch your mind and see how others think. It made lots of changes in me ... I used to be that person that catches one word from what you speak, and I don't listen to what you speak, I only listen to my own mind and then try to defend my own point of view. I used to be that person. Then I've changed. Now I know, I listen up to the end; I try to understand what other people are saying. I respect other people's point of view and myself. And then I'm trying to express or maybe having new knowledge, new points of view, new opinions, to learn.

Leyla, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

To ambassadors, the developed understanding of dialogue is connected to an acceptance of differences in points of views, and the question of truth and being right or wrong is one that many ambassadors have taken to heart. *"There is a place beyond right and wrong. I'll meet you there"* is a quote by the Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi, which is used by trainers in the AFD programme. The understanding that derives from this has left a clear mark on both international and national ambassadors, in particular on those from the Middle East.

The contrast between ambassadors' previous understanding of dialogue and this new understanding of dialogue, where different points of views are both accepted and co-existing, is particularly strong among the national ambassadors. The majority previous to their AFD involvement saw dialogue as a matter of 'convincing' the other. They describe their changed and developed understanding of dialogue in this way:

We were of the opinion that you are highly skilled in dialogue, if you are able to convince others to change their opinions. We were surprised to find that this is a huge mistake in dialogue that you try to convince others! Our previous understanding of dialogue was about holding on to your opinion, and making all those present adopt your own idea. Now after all that happened (in AFD), we were surprised to find that, no, I come in with one idea, and someone else comes in with another idea,

and everyone discusses them, using the methodologies we've learned, and it is possible that one day I might discover that my idea is wrong and his idea was better than mine and that I should be grateful to that person. Previously it was all about me being skilful with words so that I can convince others, so that they'd say: Amir is a good at winning discussions. We were surprised to find out, after we've learned about the concepts of dialogue that I would have made a successful negotiator or interlocutor, because I wanted to gain support for my idea, but not good at dialogue. So the fine line between discussion, negotiation and dialogue makes a huge difference.

Amir, national ambassador in Jordan since 2014

To me, dialogue and discussion were the same things. And if someone isn't convinced of a certain opinion, it must mean that that person is just being difficult and argumentative. Now I have come to understand that there is a great difference between to dialog and to discuss. When you discuss, it's all about convincing the one you are talking with. Dialogue on the other hand is when people of for example different ideological backgrounds come together and talk about a certain issue, and they get up shake hands and leave. It's not necessarily so in a dialog that one part would win the argument. So I clearly had a wrong understanding of what dialog is, prior to joining the project. There has been a huge change in my understanding.

Hamid, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

Personally, when I heard about dialogue in the past ... We were of the understanding previously that during a dialogue, I should convince you or you should convince me and if there should be a disagreement, the view of the older person would prevail. Customs and traditions govern the person to some extent. ... I felt that because I was the youngest and my voice was not heard, the others expressed their views and I had to express my views and try to convince them that I was right, even when my views were wrong. I don't know, but sometimes when you wish to convince somebody or reach a particular end or make a certain request from the family, a friend or anyone, you could mix truth with untruths or make use of an untruth to achieve what you want – this is not one of the characteristics of someone who conducts a dialogue. The dialogue conductor must deliver reliable information and must have confidence in the person opposite him. ... My understanding differed fundamentally following my participation in the dialogue workshops that we have been involved in.

Noor, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

My understanding of dialogue in the beginning was that either I must convince you or you must convince me. In any talk show in the Egyptian media the norm is that the guests argue, and not agree on anything or reach any solutions, and that's it, the show ends. Maybe because we were active in the field of development even before joining the ambassadors' project we realized that it is not a correct way to go about it. Either one convinces the other, or we just avoid the subject, to avoid ending up upset with each other. When we joined ambassadors for dialogue this changed. We used to avoid talking about religion and political issues but after joining the ambassadors' project we broke all the rules (taboos) and we now talk about religion and political issues without a problem. We have come to the understanding that we can hold on to our opinion, without opposing the opinion of others, and that this has to be mutual. I will respect your religious beliefs and you have to respect mine. Joining the ambassadors' projects changed our understanding in this area completely and we learned to find common points of understanding and continue dialoguing for our mutual benefit.

Rania, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

I never thought about the concept of dialogue previously or what it really is. I was talking and listening and I never felt that I have a problem in that area. In my personal life, I thought that if anyone says anything that differs from my point of view, I am not interested in it. I never knew that this is what is called to “adopt opinions”. I used to be very stubborn and unwilling to accept or listen to any point of view that differs from mine. After joining the project and realising that dialog is “sharing” opinions, and that I have to listen and understand others, and that I should try to put myself in their shoes and switch roles with them. At that point, I realised that I never knew the meaning of dialogue during my life and I never thought that it is a term that is worthy of being understood correctly. In school, no one taught us about dialogue or included a subject in our studies that thought us that we need to be dialogical, talk in a certain way, listen in a certain way or to adopt opinions in a certain way. We have come to learn that if someone says something we don’t like, we walk away and avoid that person, we never try to understand why the other person says what he says, or has the opinion that he has. This is what I used to do, but when I joined the project I understood that I have put everything in its right place. Everything in life has its proper definition; dialogue means participation, good listening, exchanging opinions and points of view and talking in a proper way that is suited for dialogue. It is not acceptable that when we differ in points of view to refuse the other person’s opinion or say that I don’t care about that persons opinions, simply because it doesn’t suit me. So everything must be put in its right place. I realize now that when I am in a dialog “setting”, I will most likely find that someone will express an opinion that I don’t agree with, but I have to be able to accept that person’s opinion. I have to fully accept that opinion I don’t necessarily have to be convinced by that opinion, but I have to respect it, and understand why that person would think that way, and that it might be a result of things that person has gone through in his life. I had never thought about that before and realized it is the basis.

Hanan, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

The national ambassadors through this new understanding of dialogue experience a way to think about communication and people of different opinions radically different from what they have grown up with. As both Rania and Hanan describe, this means that ambassadors who have previously avoided to speak about things that they knew they would disagree on, have gained an interest in and a way to do so. The newly understood distinction and difference between dialogue and discussion, as well as having been given the methods to conduct a dialogue, means that ambassadors can now in a more conscious way choose the way they communicate with others. This does not mean that they are being ‘dialogical’ all the time, but rather that they have gained a deeper understanding of themselves and the way they act.

Since the understanding of dialogue is so central to the entire programme, it is difficult to point out specific learning space or tools that helped ambassadors reach this enhanced understanding. However, some international ambassadors mention interactive dialogue exercises and some national ambassadors mention The Dialogue Handbook and the overall trainings as being important. Among the international ambassadors the trainers have for many been a source of inspiration, which has caused a tendency to copy the way trainers act and do dialogue, until ambassadors typically realise that they need to find their own way.

As pointed out by the individual ambassadors in chapter 4, the understanding of dialogue is constantly developing, due to both the involvement in the AFD programme and in life in general. Also, this new understanding of dialogue is clearly developing in close entanglement

with a set of values, a different mind-set and an inclusive worldview, which are all part of shaping the personalities of the ambassadors.

5.3 Shaping the Personality of the Ambassadors

Being asked whether being part of AFD has shaped her life, Salma, an international ambassador from Egypt, responds;

I would definitely say it's not about shaping my life; it's about shaping my personality. It made me more open to listening to others, it made me more understanding for other people's perspectives, it made me see another way, like ... separate people from their background or culture, or sometimes mixing people with their own culture and background.

Salma, international ambassadors from Egypt, phase 2

This description is supported by the answers of the survey, where 28 out of 30 international ambassadors say that being part of the programme has shaped their personality.³⁰ 29 say that being in the programme has been valuable to them on a personal level.³¹

The majority of the international survey respondents think that being part of the programme has:

- Taught them to be more reflective³²
- Changed the way they communicate with others³³
- Taught them to be a better listeners³⁴
- Taught them to be non-judgemental³⁵
- Taught them to be more accepting³⁶
- Made them more self-confident³⁷

International ambassadors say that the AFD programme has helped them to self-improvement and to become a better person. It has made them understand who they are, explore and shape their identity, better understand their own strengths and weaknesses, what they are good at, and what they need to work on. Hence, the programme has taught ambassadors to reflect, not only on their surroundings but also on themselves and their learning process. It has taught them to respect and accept different points of view – also

³⁰ 12 respondents 'completely agree', 16 'somewhat agree', 1 'neither disagree nor agree' and 1 'somewhat disagree'

³¹ 23 respondents 'completely agree', 6 'somewhat agree' and 1 'neither disagree nor agree'.

³² 17 respondents 'completely agree', 10 'somewhat agree' and 3 'neither disagree nor agree'.

³³ 13 respondents 'completely agree', 16 'somewhat agree' and 1 'neither disagree nor agree'.

³⁴ 21 respondents 'completely agree', 7 'somewhat agree' and 2 'neither disagree nor agree'.

³⁵ 15 respondents 'completely agree', 8 'somewhat agree' and 5 'neither disagree nor agree', 1 'somewhat disagree' and 1 'completely disagree'.

³⁶ 13 respondents 'completely agree', 11 'somewhat agree', 4 'neither disagree nor agree', 1 'somewhat disagree' and 1 'completely disagree'.

³⁷ 14 respondents 'completely agree', 8 'somewhat agree', 5 'neither disagree nor agree', 2 'somewhat disagree' and 1 'completely disagree'.

when they do not agree or do not understand the opinion. All together, the AFD programme has shaped their values, worldview and mind-set.

Three international ambassadors describe the change in this way:

It's just like, us, the people who we worked with has shifted from the place where we considered the difference of the other as a threat, to the area where we consider them as learning and development opportunities.

Karim, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

I have learned that we are not all the same and it's ok not all to be the same. And that was a changing point, to get the view that I cannot judge anybody unless I understand where they are coming from or ... where their actions are coming from, from what kind of values. We're not all the same, were not raised in the same society, sharing the same values and the same believes. And it's a good thing to respect each other's believes and values...

Mohab, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2

For me it has changed me in very different ways. Like, I've learned how to dare to be honest. That's one thing. I was very introvert but I'm not now, and that is an outcome of that project. I've learned how to trust myself to understand myself, and how to communicate with other people and share with people... to be dialogical, in some settings, I'm not always dialogical. I don't like to call myself dialogical. But I've learned so much about myself. And I've learned so much about my relations to my friends and family and work and how I can... how can you say it... How these relationships to people... how to have relations on a deeper level, instead of being superficial all the time. Because I really feel that we are too superficial, we don't talk, we don't involve, and this project has taught me how to be involved and invested in others.

Heba, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

National ambassadors also describe that being part of the AFD programme has influenced their worldview and the way they communicate with others. As Mona, a Jordanian ambassador says; *dialogue has become a way of life*. They now know e.g. how to see beyond 'the tip of the iceberg' to understand a person's reactions, to put themselves in other people's shoes and they have learned to listen.

Four national ambassadors describe the change in this way:

The ambassadors for dialogue project, has changed my personality a lot. I never imagined that I would be able listen and talk the way I am doing now. I used to hold on to my opinion and not to be convinced by other peoples' opinions. But now I learned how to change my point of view completely. ... It was useful to learn how to listen to others' point of view and respect it. ... As a matter of fact found that it changed our personalities.... I learned to listen to others and accept their point of view even if it is opposite to mine. I learned also that to have a dialogue we don't need to convince each other. You are happy with your point of view and I respect it and at the same time you have to respect me.

Rania, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

I learned about facilitation, and also learned how to listen to others and to remain quiet and listen before answering. I'm not as concerned with preparing an answer, but am more concerned with actually listening to the person talking. I take my time before answering, and have become calmer.

... I loved in the programme that it has helped to raise many questions in my mind. This is unusual as before I used to look for answers to my questions but I learned that it is not important to do that, and that it is ok to have many unanswered questions, and listen to others.

Sarah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

Now with respect to myself, ... I have changed from a tense person to a calmer person; now I listen and then decide what my opinion will be. Also I used to take quick decisions when angry, I didn't listen, but what I wanted, I'd do it. I was very stubborn. There were some wrong decisions. Now, I must listen, I have to understand and then I decide. This change has been happening since 2012.

Mona, national ambassador in Jordan since 2012

To be honest, the thing I most benefited from in the dialogue training ... was that the other person is not necessarily mistaken even if he does not share my views. Even if he holds a different view and I am convinced that his views are wrong that does not mean that he is no longer a friend. Or it is not necessary for two people holding opposing views to be in conflict. Having different views is not wrong, on the contrary it is good. We are built on differences, each of us has his views. This principle was convincing and I now apply it.

Youssef, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

The programme can be seen as a 'can opener', as senior trainer Gry Guldberg names it, which teaches ambassadors to see themselves from the outside and understand their own mind-set. The ambassadors throughout the programme learn to be curious and ask questions. They learn that they are not necessarily right and do not possess the only possible perspective. They gain the ability to wonder about themselves, and ask 'what do I believe in?' They become more courageous. Their self-reflection and reflection in general is increased. They learn to see things from an outside perspective and read social situations and group dynamics. They get a toolset of facilitation skills, conflict resolution techniques and dialogue skills. They are taken outside of their safe zone, into their stretch- or learning zone – some even touches the panic zone - but when experiences are shared with other ambassadors or reflected upon, they learn from this stretch. All in all they come out with 'stronger personal leadership'.

In this way they are in fact 'invited into a new universe', which gives them another outlook on life. To sum up their learning of the programme, ambassadors' understanding of the world moves from 'universe' to 'multiverse'; they learn that life and the world has many perspectives and they exit the programme with an approach that allows them to incorporate dialogue in their life.

As examples of how dialogue becomes incorporated into the ambassadors very being, five ambassadors say:

We are not Ambassadors for Dialogue with a three hours workshop. We are Ambassadors for Dialogue with transferring what we have learned, transferring dialogue in each and every day of life. It is not just a workshop that we are affecting, it is your family, it is how you act, affecting people ... Whoever you meet, you are trying to be dialogical. It is like a 24 hours job.

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4

It actually helped me to ... instead of making judgements on other people who are different or who have a different like religious points of view... Instead of judging them, if you try to expose your mind and try to truly know what they think ... that will be much better for you. ... It will make you a better person and it will help with new relationship with other people. And I think that was one of the defining points in my life, because it has really changed me on a personal level from that way of having like such a judgemental person, maybe to a personal choice to really understand people and to just trying to be open to all other people no matter how different they are. And I have felt that after, even outside the project I have felt that impact on my life. So I think that is one of the most important things I have gained from this project.

Rami, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot project and phase 2

I expected to gain a lot of skills and facilitate a process... that we could get people to sit down and talk together and maybe agree ... in a good way without arguing. ... And then I thought of all the people that we were going to do workshops for as the main target group that we were going to change them through our workshop. And then we got to Jordan and we got blown away by all this talking about homosexuality and... I got very mad and someone else was very mad and then the trainers tried to put us back together. And then there was some kind of - it sounds like a commercial for toothpaste or something - but it was some kind of realization that maybe I am the other main target group, and that there was something very wrong with us also. So we're not just learning to facilitate the process but we're also the product ourselves. And that thing about seeing the world through another person's eyes - like we were saying that homosexuality was a sickness and now we're saying that they should get married in a church, and I got very angry and then in the end she learned to see my perspective, and I learned to see her perspective, and we became friends and could talk about it in a way where we were trying to understand the other person's perspective instead of just disagreeing without fighting. That thing about me getting blown away, and then being transformed in a good way, I think was very unexpected.

Walid, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

It is a life changing experience ... the world, how you view the world, not being in the centre of everything and placing your culture, like there are many cultures and then, you are just one little small culture between all the others. Talking about what you believe, challenge yourself, having friends with people with other political, cultural. The whole, also the travelling is very important. A lot of people, a lot of for example Egyptians wouldn't have for example the opportunity to travel without the programme, so travelling itself is an experience that changes people. I mean having to eat food that is different than yours, talking to people in the street, with another language that you don't understand. Just the travelling experience itself changes people.

Sofia, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2

I found my best friend and I ended up marrying her, so I think I live with the project every day. ... We had deep conversation around a Lego table at Dan Hostel in Vejle; I think that was a good start. ... No but, I think for me, we have a lot of scout courses where we do a lot of this ... transformative learning and do a lot of personal evaluation and try to develop peoples' leadership skills. ... But I think, even though with all the things that I've experienced and all the countries that I've been doing activities in, then this was still the most impactful personal experience that I've had.

Morten, international ambassador from Denmark, pilot phase and phase 2

The fact that ambassadors describe their involvement in the AFD as a 'life changing experience', a 'milestone' or as 'a self-exploring journey' and overall experience a change in their worldview and personality, signifies a *transformative* learning experience.

In the psychology of learning, one operates with the theory that during learning, what is being learned must be incorporated into a person's cognitive schemes. As something is learned the existing schemes are activated. Due to each person having individual schemes, the learning will always be individual although the same outer impulses are given. As impulses – that being a dialogue exercise, travelling to a foreign country or talking to someone with different opinions - reach the ambassadors' individual schemes, it will result in one of several types of learning. For some ambassadors – and in some situations – the learning will be assimilative, adding to existing schemes, accommodative, breaking with existing schemes (aha-experiences) or transformative, re-organising the existing schemes. What many ambassadors experience is a combination of all three types of learning; accumulation of knowledge, accommodative aha-experiences and a gradual transformation of their personalities. This connection between learning processes and processes of identity are also closely connected to lifelong learning.

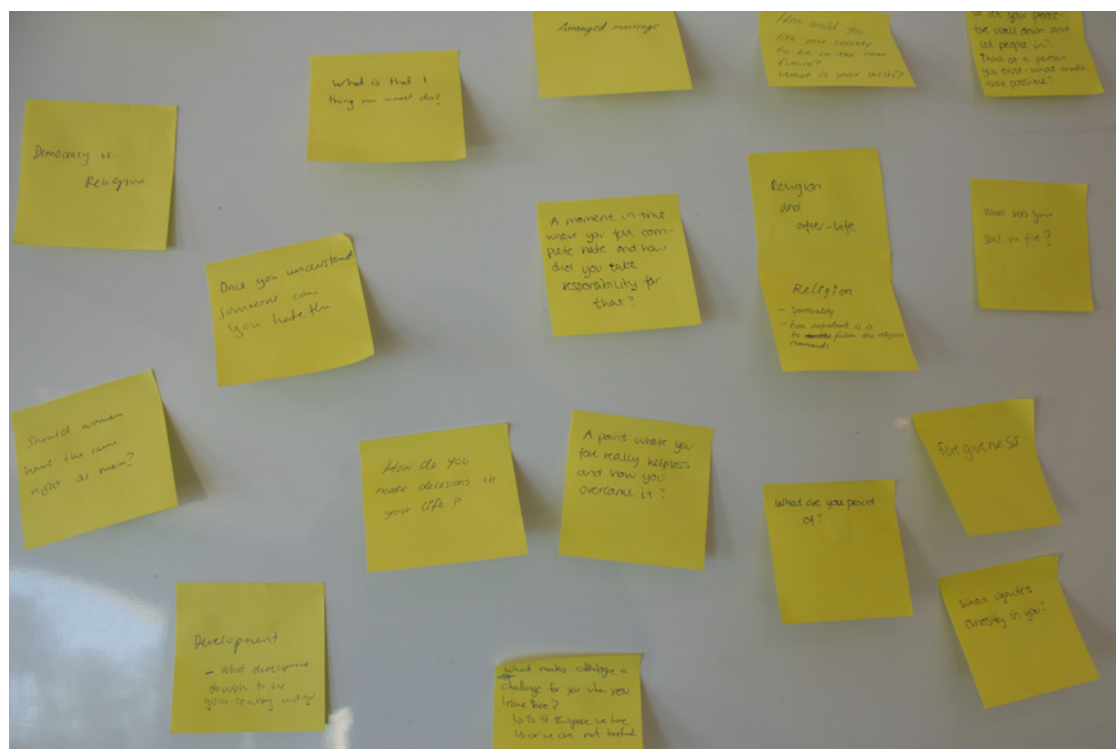
As Walid says, this personal transformation is not an expected outcome for any of the ambassadors, but neither something that they regret having undergone. Another Danish ambassador says:

It has taken me through a transformative learning process. ... I can definitely see a difference in how I see things and how I do stuff. It has made me less arrogant, because you get this kick in your butt of "stop thinking you know all about the world and that your opinion is the correct one." ... I think you reflect a lot about your own personality because you're forced to do it even though you don't want it. So, yeah ... it's not because I wanted that experience of myself, but then someone takes you through it in a good way. ... It's not like I can't recognize myself or anything like that, but it just changes something in you and you take it up to consideration all together and then you change it if you think it's not good.

Mads, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Although some national ambassadors do describe their participation in the AFD as having transformed them into more dialogical persons, they are generally, compared with the international ambassadors, not describing their participation in the AFD as 'life changing' and transformative to the same extend.

The transformative experience is personal and self-explorative, but many ambassadors point out that the individual and collective learning is closely connected. As many of the above quotes show, the learning happens in the meeting with the other ambassadors. An Egyptian ambassador puts it this way: *"you cannot improve yourself alone. And you cannot discover yourself without being exposed to different people."* Hence, as ambassadors develop individually in the meeting with 'different people' and different situations, they simultaneously reach a better understanding of each other.



Topics for dialogue suggested by ambassadors at a training seminar in Egypt



Ambassadors during a training seminar in Denmark

5.4 Increased Understanding between Youth from Denmark and the Middle East

It was really nice to find out that even though we are really different – that is what we think that we are really different – we found many similarities and things in common and I thought that we are not that different.

Raneem, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

Fulfilling two stated objectives of the programme, the international ambassadors describe many personal takes on an increased mutual understanding both between youth from Denmark and the Middle East and between youth within the three countries.

Increased understanding between youth from Denmark and the Middle East

All 30 international survey respondents express that their involvement in the programme has given them a greater understanding of different views and opinions of young people from Egypt, Jordan and Denmark.³⁸

Several ambassadors from Egypt and Jordan previously had negative assumptions about Denmark and Danish culture due to the cartoon controversy and the media coverage. A Jordanian ambassador here tells how meeting Danes and visiting Denmark was a turning point:

In Denmark it was a big turnover because all, the only thing we knew about Denmark was the drawings of Mohammed, the Danish products. We don't know anything, we think they really hate us, and that is why they are making fun of our religion. ... this is what we hear, this is what we knew. ... but actually that was one of the purposes of why I wanted to go to that project, that I read it was in Denmark. Okay, I was interesting why they did this, the culture, I think there is something missing. So when I went to Denmark, and actually before that when the Danes came to Jordan, I talked to them. We talked about the Mohammed drawings, we talked a lot of stuff, a lot of things in common, more in differences ... it was just a culture shock. Seriously, exactly like me, a lot of them the same hobbies, the same habits, the same as my friends in school... and when I went to Denmark I did not expect that ... yeah, it was a big shock for me.

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4

Through the intercultural aspect of the AFD programme international ambassadors get the chance to meet young people, who they can connect with, experience culture first hand and confront their own assumptions. In this way, they describe, they gain a deeper understanding of the personal lives, opinions and views of youth from the other participating countries. Egyptian, Jordanian and Danish ambassadors are surprised to find that although they are different, they also have things in common. Many are surprised to find that they connect well with other nationalities that they expected. As a result all respondents from Jordan and Egypt, who entered with negative assumptions about Denmark, and participated with the primarily objective to understand Danish culture due to the cartoon controversy, come out with a positive experience. Although the current situation between the involved countries is

³⁸ 22 respondents 'completely agree', 7 respondents 'somewhat agree' and 1 'somewhat disagree'.

not as problematic as when the programme began in 2009, an international Jordanian ambassador from the pilot phase and phase two finds that the intercultural dialogue continues to be important. He believes that it is still important to clarify existing assumptions and be proactive to avoid major problems in the future.

Danish ambassadors too gain an increased understanding of Arab youth, both through the intercultural aspects of the training and through the workshops they facilitate. Two Danish ambassadors say:

I think that what I learned mostly from the informal settings, was not so much about dialogue or dialogue facilitation, but if we take this aspect of intercultural Danish/Arab – and also this accepting differences-thing. I was put together with some people that I wouldn't necessarily have sought out myself, or had looked for, and had such a good chance to get to know in such an intensive way. And that happened over dinner and that also changed me to... to get to know these people.

Stine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Well I think when I started I had a very academic outlook. I already worked at Middle Eastern studies and wanted to study it, so it kind of had a very top down view of society and the world. But I guess once I actually got involved and really, I mean it sounds so stupid to say it, but I realized that these people are actually people. No, but they have some personal reality that you really can't get into depth with through a top down perspective. And these personal realities and personal experiences about the world around them are... they are so everywhere, they completely seep through the society. ... I guess I thought I would be doing justice to their reality, for the perception of reality by merely looking at it with a top down perspective as some kind of academic study with putting people in a box. Because it's not about boxing, they are connected and they are connected with the outside world and have some realities that I really can't come into depth with without having some deep and meaningful conversations with them. And it was really something I didn't know before, I guess everybody knows it since it is so obvious, but you kind of get lost in the academic world sometimes and when you work with the kind of things, so you kind of miss the most obvious. So for me it changed from a more academic perspective a more top down perspective, to being just interested in what people are thinking. ... I had been in the Middle East before, but it was more as a tourist so I wouldn't actually engage with the local population ... But, I guess I just threw the workshops and got connected with a lot of the youth. For me it was really baffling how a workshop in three hours could create an atmosphere where people could be so honest about themselves and their own lives and tell complete strangers about very personal things that they probably don't even share with their friends and family. And that kind of gave me an interesting perspective on them and also on myself. I think mostly it gave me an interesting perspective on my own life and the society that I live in.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

Through the programme, Danish ambassadors also get the chance of getting to know 'actual people' from Jordan and Egypt, whom they may not have had outspoken assumptions about, but neither did really know. Several Danish ambassadors describe their interest in the Middle East as coming from an academic point of view, but through the programme, the personal meetings and the workshops, they learn about the societal and political situation in real life.

To a somewhat smaller degree, but still making up the majority of the respondents, 24 of the 30 international survey respondents felt that the programme has changed their perception of the other participating countries.³⁹

Increased understanding between youth in the ambassadors' own country

In addition to the increased understanding between youth from Denmark and the Middle East, 29 out of the 30 the international survey respondents also say that they through participating in the AFD programme have gained a greater understanding of different views and opinions of young people in their own country.⁴⁰ This greater understanding is typically gained through the ambassadors' own international teams. A Danish ambassador gives an example:

Naima and I are very good friends and we're both Danes, but we're still from two very different cultures. She's grown up in the Arab environment on Nørrebro, I grew up on the countryside on Sydfyn, and that is really, really different. And then when we came back from ten days in Jordan and I was filled up with all those impressions and stuff, a lot of questions come afterwards, and then it was really nice to have a good friend that knew much more about it than I did and that I felt safe with actually asking about stuff with religion and sex and marriage and stuff like that, which I didn't get a chance to ask down there. So that's, I think the whole big thing about intercultural learning in that process... I kind of talk to Naima, maybe she didn't learn anything from me, but at least I learned a lot from her.

Mads, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

The Danish international team is made up of both ethnic Danes and Danes with ethnic minority background, which, as Mads describes, creates a valuable learning environment both during and after the seminars. In the teams from Egypt and Jordan most ambassadors have the same ethnicity, but nevertheless learn from each other's differences. Magdi, an international ambassador from Egypt, describes how both the international Egyptian team and the national team in Egypt created a space for understanding differences – in particular related to political opinions - among youth in Egypt:

One of the learning spaces for me was... the international Egyptian team itself. At first we thought we were similar as we come from the same background, the same culture, mostly from the same religion. So, we thought like, we are so similar. But actually at the end of the project, we found that we are very different, we have different values although we share the same background. That was one of the learning spaces. And right now the national team, and what we are trying to do, is another learning space. ...

Interviewer: What do you learn from the national teams?

Actually it is kinda similar, because with the national team, most of the team members are... no I'm not saying that we are different. No actually we are different. And the places we are working on are different, some in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt and Alexandria, and we are different and the team is different. The team dynamic differs when you perform, and it differs from the international...

³⁹ 15 respondents 'completely agree', 9 'somewhat agree', 4 'neither disagree nor agree', 1 'somewhat disagree' and 1 'completely disagree'.

⁴⁰ 12 respondents 'completely agree', 17 'somewhat agree' and 1 'somewhat disagree'.

Interviewer: What does that teach you?

Similar to what I felt when working with the international Egyptian team. ... Again I felt it when I started with the national team. Actually, the more you facilitate workshops and the more you co-facilitate and work together with fellow Egyptians and fellow Danes, you feel that although you are coming from the same background, you see things differently. And you... the value you give to a certain thing differs to the thing he or she gives to the same things. ... Most of the examples have to do with the political scene. One of the members of the international Egyptian team, he is kinda pro-Islamic.... And we talked a lot about it, and me I describe myself as more liberal. So we had a lot of talking and discussion about how we see the political scene.

Magdi, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

Hence, the increased acceptance of differences in terms of culture and opinions is not only functioning in respect to people of other nationalities - 'between West and East', as a Jordanian ambassador puts it, but in respect to people from e.g. various areas in a country, different religions and contrasting political opinions. The ambassadors will use each other, the friendships formed and the dialogue tools learned to overcome and understand the differences. Although on a smaller scale than the West/East understanding, international ambassadors from the Middle East see this as something that needs to be worked on – in particular in terms of learning to listen to each other. Jordanian ambassadors wish to do this through a strengthened national level of AFD.



Ambassadors working in their team during a training seminar in Denmark

5.5 The Ability to Work in Intercultural Settings

Closely connected to the intercultural setting of the programme, the above-described increased understanding between ambassadors of very diverse backgrounds and the format of the AFD that lets international ambassadors of different nationalities work closely together, is the ability to work in intercultural settings. 27 of the 30 international survey respondents say that being part of the programme has taught them to work in intercultural and diverse settings.⁴¹ Many describe that this ability is primarily learned through teamwork, about which two international ambassadors say:

I think I learned to cooperate across cultural divides, and also across very, very different ways to approach teamwork and to approach the process where you have to get an outcome that everybody is satisfied with. I've also learned about my own ability to work in such a team work and how I act and what my personal limit is.

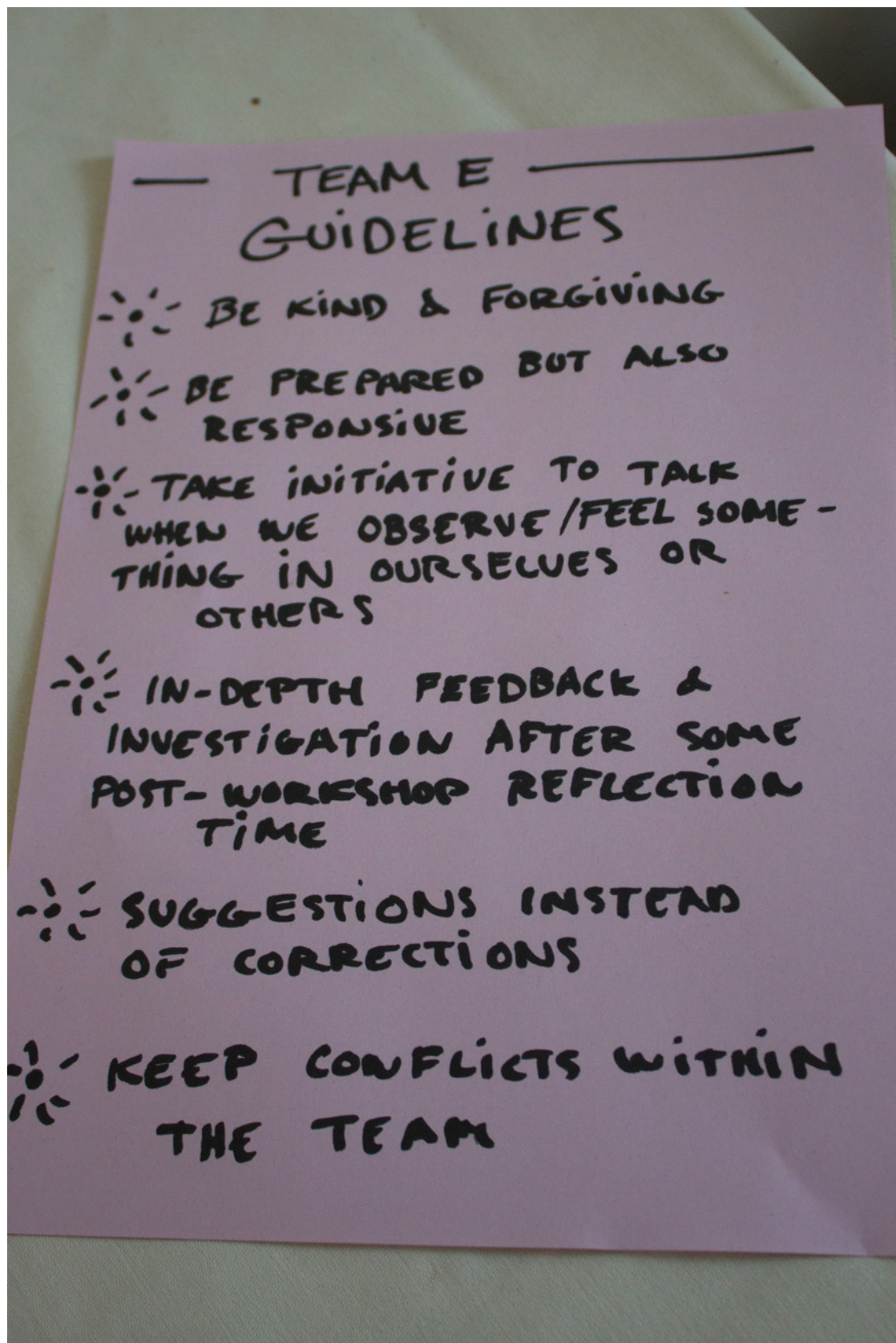
Kristine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 2

The teamwork and the totally different cultures ... it was like 100% different cultures so you can really see, I am not saying it was a bad thing, but it was something to work on. And it was really great, ... I can now overcome any other culture (barrier), because for me Danish culture was really hard and the Egyptian one too. ... Its not (that) I now have this magic thing, but I know how to ...like I have the skills to overcome it, to understand that there are other cultures totally different, and I need to overcome it and we need to work together...

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4

The teamwork requires the international ambassadors to work on the specific task of planning and facilitating in order to conduct successful workshops that convey a message about or through dialogue. The focus on a shared outcome and the necessity of reaching a productive compromise teaches ambassadors an approach and ability that is useful both inside and outside the AFD programme.

⁴¹ 21 respondents 'completely agree', 6 'somewhat agree', 2 'neither disagree nor agree' and 1 'completely disagree'.



Guidelines for teamwork

5.6 The Ability to Teach Methods and Values of Dialogue to Others

Fulfilling a programme objective, 28 out of the 30 ambassadors responding to the survey say that being part of the AFD has enabled them to teach others in the methods of dialogue⁴² and to pass on the value of dialogue.⁴³ While teaching the methods primarily has to do with facilitation of workshops as well as other activities regarding dialogue, passing on the values is something happening in a lot more settings – and less noticeably.

As a means to teach methods and values to others, ambassadors have learned facilitation skills. For many this aspect is a surprising element in the AFD programme, but also something that they treasure and use afterwards. Three ambassadors reflect over the facilitation skills that they have gained:

How to train people, and facilitate, I didn't know anything before I came to the project. And now I can easily do a workshop and get people in dialogue and stuff like that.

Jacob, international ambassador and volunteer trainer from Denmark

I think of course one thing that I have learned, I also didn't know anything about standing in front of people and being responsible of that process in a way, to put people through something, through an experience. To have some skills and tools of course gave that.

Yasmine, international ambassador and volunteer trainer from Jordan

I think on my part, what I have learned has been directed more towards more practical matter, I've learned to be a better project manager, to be a better facilitator, to be a better group leader, in that sense, to facilitate group work and projects and time management and facilitation and standing in front of people. So it's very practical what I've learned in that sense. And something that I have been using – I'm using quite a lot – in work, in other projects.

Tanja, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 2

Ambassadors learn the practical skills related to facilitation: how to plan for a workshop, set up objectives for the learning of the participants, how to fulfil these objectives via activities and how to present. But they also learn the social skills that are equally important when facilitating: they gain confidence to speak in public, learn how to be present and establish a comfort zone in the room, how to listen actively, how to get people to talk, how to read the room and the group dynamics of participants.

24 of the 30 international survey respondents would like to increase the focus on facilitations skills in order to create an ideal learning experience.⁴⁴

The ability to teach methods and values of dialogue to others does however not only go through formally facilitated settings. It is as much about *being* an ambassador for dialogue,

⁴² 18 respondents 'completely agree', 10 'somewhat agree' and 2 'neither disagree nor agree'.

⁴³ 16 respondents 'completely agree', 11 'somewhat agree', 2 'neither disagree nor agree' and 1 'somewhat disagree'.

⁴⁴ 24 respondents would like to increase the focus, while 6 would like it to stay the same.

subscribing to the values of dialogue and through ones actions to pass them on. Two ambassadors say:

When we start training with a new team people focus on the values pertaining to dialogue, but we need to realise that I personally have to gain these values in my personality and not be concerned with whether the person I am in dialogue with has them or not. It's none of my business; I should focus on myself and my values. I should question my own values and behaviours. And make sure I have the values necessary for dialogue. If I am a dialogical person I have to make sure that I use these values with others. I experienced that if I do that with someone that person will respond positively. If I trust him he will trust me. If I respect and listen to him he will do the same automatically. But I have to be the one who starts.

Abdallah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

I guess the title 'ambassador' means that you're actually trying to spread it, so if you're an ambassador you're trying to actively spread the way of being dialogical or having dialogue in this certain way. And I guess you can be an ambassador by preaching about it but you can also be it by living it. So I think if you live it, if you try to live it, then you're still in some way an ambassador, but I'm not going around telling, here's a talking stick and you can talk now. So I'm not out doing activities or out telling people about theoretical stuff about dialogue, but I try to, I just try to live it myself and if people learn by that, then I think it's more organic and fluid. I think that's really what we are hoping that happens. So when people go to workshops they try to improve certain aspects of their own personality and then other people see that, and then they think, "oh I'd also like to be like that", so people kind of learn goodness from each other and imitates each other and that's how it spreads. So I guess in that way, I would still consider myself to be an ambassador.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

Both Abdallah and Tarek are trying to 'live dialogue' and through their actions inspire other. While Abdallah is currently active in the national work in Egypt, Tarek no longer considers himself part of the official AFD programme. However, he is not the only ambassador who sees himself as an ambassador for dialogue, even when they are not working actively with the AFD any longer. Many ambassadors who were part of the programme years ago continue to associate themselves with the AFD.

5.7 Motivations for Continuing in the Programme

Many ambassadors – both international and national - describe how their motivation for being in the programme changes and increases parallel to their involvement, the experiences they get and as they gain of a deeper understanding of dialogue and the cause of the programme. Many ambassadors see a strong need for dialogue in society, they feel proud of being part of the programme, and have a strong belief in the message that it conveys.

There is a strong sense of ownership and several international ambassadors say that they 'feel part of' the AFD. One ambassador describes it this way:

I don't only feel part of it, I feel like I own it. I feel like it is mine you know, I feel that every success that is achieved by AFD is a personal success for me. Even if I'm not a part of it somehow. ... you know, I feel that the project is just part of my life and no matter how far I will get from the project I will be a part of it.

Rami, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2

Neither of the international ambassadors, who have been involved for a number of years – or were involved a number of years back - had expected that they would still feel this connected to the programme to this day. A junior trainer, who has been involved in the programme since the beginning, explains this strong feeling of ownership with two factors: Ambassadors are part of forming the programme, and their belief in the cause. As will be elaborated on in chapter 6, the ambassadors experience being part of a *community of practice* that is not only teaching them skills, but also creates relationships and evolves around a topic that has come to matter to them. The fact that they are organised around a particular area of knowledge and activity gives the ambassadors a sense of joint enterprise and identity.⁴⁵

While some international ambassadors feel that one phase is sufficient time for learning, many apply for and participate in a second phase of the programme. They feel that there are still many things they need to learn and work on personally, but also that they want to continue being ‘part of’ the programme.

Some of the recent international ambassadors would like to reapply if their role could be different during their second phase – e.g. junior trainer. A few of the ‘older’ ambassadors, who have done two phases say that they felt bored during the second phase, and would like to learn something new. Another ambassador on the contrary describes the transition from his first to his second phase this way:

Maybe in the first you meet new people, you are trying to mix with new people, you are trying to learn some new cultures. But in the second phase you already knew the people, you already knew the cultures... It actually took us more than three seminars to know each other and then to work with each other, and this is the Danish culture and this is the Egyptian culture and this is how you work with that. ... So the basic things, the icebreaking part was finished: now we are focusing on how to deliver the message, what are the purposes ... the real work. The second phase was amazing. Actually we were laughing in the second phase, like “oh my god, we used to do that in the workshops”.

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4

Generally ambassadors’ ‘hunger’ for knowledge increases while they are in the programme. Ambassadors want to learn more skills and techniques: *“the more we learned the more we wanted more”*, as Khadija, an international Jordanian ambassador from phase two, says.

Also the national ambassadors share this ‘hunger’. A national Jordanian ambassador, who work professionally as a life skill trainer, says:

My motives have changed a great deal. I told you before, my motives as a person who gives training sessions, was to learn something new, so that I can give training sessions in it, and add it to the topics I train school dropouts on... But when I joined the programme I found out that in each stage of the programme, there is something new, each skill is better than the one before it. ... This makes you think: “no, I must continue, because if I miss this stage I will lose a lot of things, like the things I missed which were before (this stage)”. So my insistence to continue with the

⁴⁵ Wenger 1998, Smith 2009

project is: I'm developing, it's not static like in some other programmes (where they tell you); "Take this manual or I'll send it to you by email and go give the training." No, the programme does not train this way, we train through practice and I always focus on that. My determination was caused to the greatest extent by the practices; I'm learning personal practices that may be applied to our society.

Amir, national ambassador from Jordan since 2014

Although Amir is still partly driven by a personal motivation to learn more, the national ambassadors generally express a change in motivation from personal to societal level. As Aya from Egypt puts it: *"when I joined the project my motivations and ambitions were personal. Now I hope to spread the idea."* Two national ambassadors in Egypt continue:

If I thought that I needed to develop my knowledge about dialogue in the beginning, I am now aware of what dialogue means, its tools and how I can apply it. I am saturated now with understanding that concept so I should now concentrate on presenting it to others. Some people transferred the culture of dialog to me, and it had a great impact on me, so its now my turn to deliver the message to others so they too can benefit. I feel a sense of responsibility in relation to transferring what I have learned to others. So actually my motivation has only increased in relation to spreading out the message of dialog.

Hanan, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

I am continuing in the project because I feel that the workshops have "cumulated effect" on the people who join our workshops. What we tell them might not cause an immediate effect but it sheds light on concepts in their minds.

Sarah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

As Hanan says, ambassadors feel a sense of responsibility to pass on their newfound knowledge to others and, like Sarah claims, they see the workshops, through which they are trying to do so, proving effective. The interactive training, dynamic content, personal development, increasing belief in dialogue and a wish to spread the 'idea of dialogue' it in society hence are all motivational factors that makes the national ambassadors stay in the AFD programme.



Senior trainer Gry Guldberg speaks on reflection at a training seminar in Egypt

CHAPTER 6

6 PRIMARY LEARNING SPACES AND DIALOGICAL LEARNING PATTERNS

Well for me personally, it was difficult to measure the change because you know when you are yourself, and like, you grow but you don't see it because you are yourself. But maybe you have been so much different, but you don't see it. It's like when you put on weight – you can't see it, but others can.

Maya, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 4

While the previous chapter focused on the *results* of the AFD programme in terms of the ambassadors' learning, this chapter focuses on the *process* of learning – the graduate 'putting on weight' as Maya describes it in the above quote. Here we focus on *how*, *where* and *when* the ambassadors learned, what is outlined in the previous chapter. We look into the *learning spaces* of the programme and try to answer the question: what was conducive to the ambassadors' dialogical learning - and what wasn't?

Learning spaces is here defined broadly as events, elements, circumstances and situations within the framework of the AFD programme. The overall learning environment of the AFD programme, its combination of elements, situations and learning spaces, is highly rated by the international ambassadors (see fig. 1). In this chapter we identify and examine the primary spaces for dialogical learning, including both the non-formal, planned learning happening primarily within the programme and the informal, unplanned learning happening within as well as outside and beyond the programme.

The entire programme can be, and is to many ambassadors, considered one major learning space in which learning happens as a long process – a 'learning journey' if you like. Because ambassadors see their learning as a continuous process, where they 'learn each moment', many ambassadors found it difficult to pinpoint *the* most significant learning spaces – let alone decipherer what they learned from *each* particular learning space. Instead they mentioned some or many different settings, which in combination were important to them.

To make the learning spaces tangible, even in the cases where they are not, we have in this impact study broken the primary learning space of the programme down into smaller identified units. In the following the identified significant learning spaces have been divided into three primary timely settings, following the structure of the international level; that of the 10day intercultural training seminar and dialogue activities that in between the 10days intercultural training seminar and dialogue activities and that after completing the phase(s), i.e. leaving the international work. They two latter are here presented together, as they both take place away from the condensed, shared physical space.

There are in this impact study no significant differences between the international ambassadors from the three countries in terms of learning patterns. There is however a significant difference between the learning patterns of the international and national

ambassadors. Yet, based on the available data of this impact study, it is limited how much it is possible to say about the learning spaces and general dialogical learning patterns of the national ambassadors. Due to the identified, significant learning spaces, in which the national ambassadors engage, being much fewer than those of the international ambassadors, they are here presented in the context of the international programme.

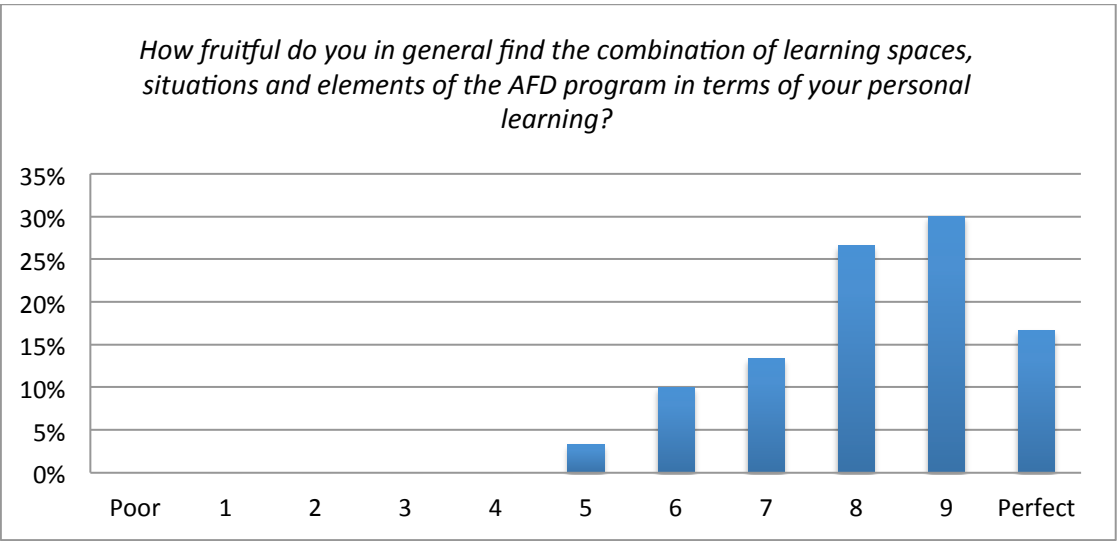


Fig. 1

6.1 Intercultural Dialogue Activities

At a core of the international training are the three seminars per phase, one in each country that all international ambassadors included in this impact study express have been hugely important to their learning. During these 10 days, spent partly in a remote location and partly in the capital, the ambassadors are given theoretical and practical dialogue training and they plan and conduct a number of intercultural workshops for youth at e.g. universities. This is also where the international ambassadors meet and spend time with each other during joint activities, teamwork, breaks, meals and the day off. During each seminar ambassadors of two nationalities will experience being in the home country of the third nationality – an intercultural exchange, which in itself acts as a learning space. The length of the training seminar is a quality to many ambassadors, since it creates the opportunity for them to engage in both non-formal and informal learning spaces and for conflicts to both arise and be solved.

The AFD programme provides ambassadors with non-formal education primarily through the training seminars, but also creates ample opportunities for informal learning. Non-formal education is as a concept connected to lifelong learning – being the extension of education and learning throughout life – and can be described as ‘acknowledging the importance of

education, learning and training that takes place outside recognized educational institutions.⁴⁶ Non-formal learning is often understood as the midway point on the continuum stretching from formal to informal learning: formal education is the ‘hierarchical structured, chronologically graded educational system’, informal learning is the ‘lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences’ and in our environment, whereas non-formal education is ‘any organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives’.⁴⁷ As this distinction is largely administrative, there is in the AFD programme, as is often the case, an overlap of the non-formal and informal learning spheres and outcomes. What more distinctly define the training of the AFD programme as non-formal are the negotiable and contextualised curriculum, the highly participatory approach and the sense of ownership among the ambassadors.⁴⁸ It may therefore be more useful to apply Alan Roger’s suggested continuum stretching from non-formal education over participatory education and to informal learning. Here informal learning is defined as all that ‘incidental learning, unstructured, unpurposeful, but the most extensive and most important part of learning that all of us do every day of our lives’.⁴⁹ This enables us to speak about both non-formal and participatory education as planned learning within the AFD framework, while informal can still be defined as unplanned learning.

Theoretical and practical training

The majority of the respondents of the survey find that receiving theoretical⁵⁰ and, in particular, practical training⁵¹ has had a very positive impact on their personal learning. The respondents also find that it would be fruitful to increase the focus especially on the practical training, in order to create an ideal learning experience.⁵² This supports the idea already brought forth by trainers and managers, to downplay theory in the first seminar at least, to teach ambassadors more through practice. As an addition to this, an ambassador suggests to skip workshops in the first seminar to focus on the ambassadors’ own learning.

The training is by many ambassadors considered the backbone of their learning. This is where they are first introduced to dialogue and are given the chance to practice it in a controlled environment, but it is in the combination with other learning spaces that it truly impacts the ambassadors’ learning. A Danish international ambassador says:

My learning points come from everywhere in this project. I can’t put a finger on this is 100 per cent – there’s a lot of things that work together somehow. So for me, when we have the seminar, where the trainers train us, there’s some tools, there’s the practice of how to go out and talk. I learn so much from that. But I learn even more from it when I have to use it somehow in my life, in a workshop or in whatever setting that is. So sometimes there’s some things I have learned – some things that we learn from the seminar, and suddenly a year after, it’s like... how do you say it... an

⁴⁶ Tight 1996, Smith 2001

⁴⁷ Combs, Prosser and Ahmed 1973, Smith 2001

⁴⁸ Rogers 2004, Smith 2001

⁴⁹ Rogers 2004: 8

⁵⁰ 18 respondents find it to have a ‘very positive impact’, 8 ‘some positive impact’ and 4 ‘little positive impact’.

⁵¹ 25 respondents find it to have a ‘very positive impact’ and 5 ‘some positive impact’.

⁵² 18 would like to increase the focus on practical training, while 12 would like it to stay the same.

epiphany. “This is how I need to handle this situation”. ... To me it’s when the trainer tells me something, it’s when I listen to my teammate, when we have to practice the tools that they just gave us. Or we are sitting over dinner and we are having a dialogue over something. I see everything is connected for me. I see it also in my workshops, and I see it also in the evaluation of the workshops. I see it also in my personal volunteering life, and... like, I learn in so many different ways. And sometimes I learn instantly, when they tell me something, and sometimes it’s something that I need to work on within myself. And therefore, when it’s really implemented within myself, it shows later.

Heba, international volunteer from Denmark, phase 4

The practical and theoretical training takes place in the first half of the seminar, at a remote location that allows ambassadors to focus on the group. Senior and junior trainers, who have received very positive feedback from the ambassadors, give sessions on various topics. The sessions involve varying degrees of participation and can all be characterized as either non-formal or participatory education.

The overall focus, intentions and desired outcomes of the seminar are drawn up by the coordinators, while the final programme and intentions for each sessions are designed by the trainers and decided upon in collaboration between coordinators and trainers. During the third seminar of phase 4, the theme was ‘Mastering Dialogue’. The intentions for the seminar were to ‘have the ambassadors see in their actions that they have taken part in AFD’, and that all ambassadors ‘stepped into a transformative learning space’. This objective supports the transformative experience described in chapter 3. The programme included day one as ‘take off’, day two with sessions on courage, curiosity, active listening and open questions, day three with sessions on empathy, holding space and self-expression, and day four with teambuilding and working labs, where the ambassadors prepared for the workshops. The programme was created to reflect the feedback from the last seminar, as the content of the programme is not static, but in constant flux.

The trainers have throughout the programme had various roles. In the very beginning they were merely involved as external trainers teaching certain topics that had been decided on by the coordinators. Since, the trainers have become a lot more involved in the development of the programme content. The two senior trainers who have been part of the AFD programme since 2009 are now both very involved and passionate about the programme. They too find that they learn from being part of it. As coordinators and trainers began to meet frequently the programme started to become dialogical, not only in its content but also in its structure. Together the management and trainers experienced that to function in a dialogical way on the ‘front stage’ the programme needed to be dialogical too on the ‘back stage’, to use the terms of sociologist Ervin Goffman.⁵³

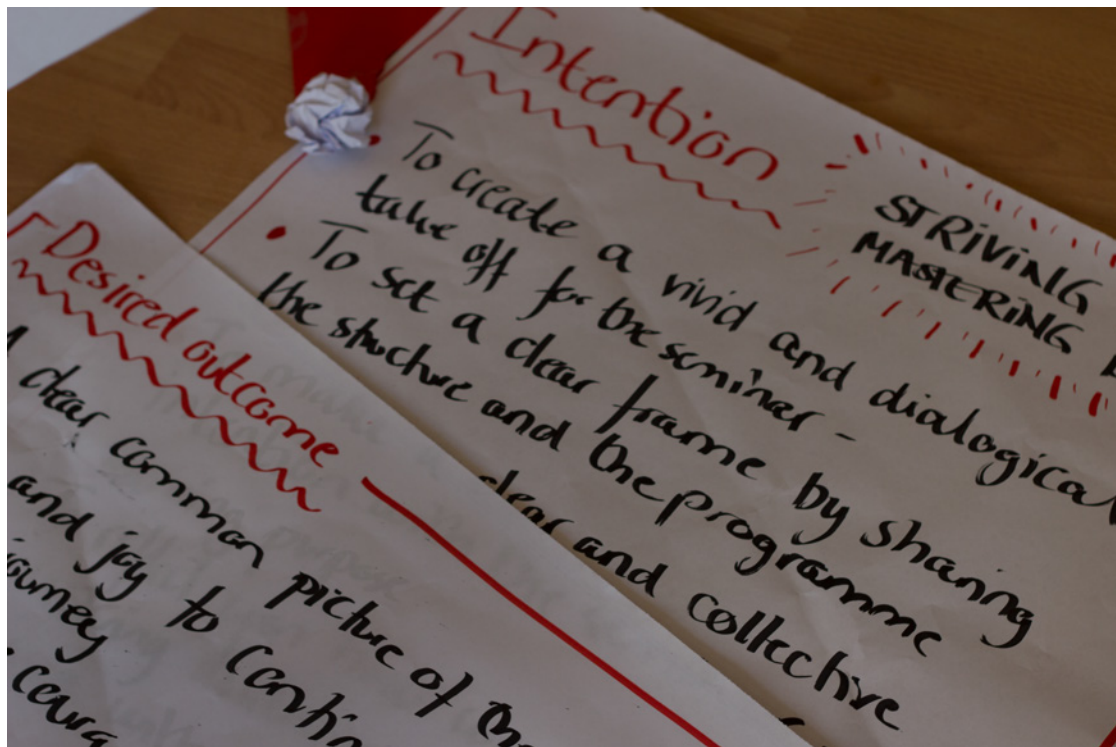
The trainers find the current structure very responsive to the needs of the ambassadors; they are well ‘calibrated’ with each other, and the programme is dynamic and co-created by all involved. Although DUF is the programme holder, the management team makes most decisions together, and there is a relatively large transparency towards ambassadors. The question of funding and AFD’s affiliation with the DAPP objectives is probably the main

⁵³ Goffman 1959

exception, which has occasionally created debate among the ambassadors. As the programme is largely based on voluntary involvement from ambassadors and trainers, it is as a trainer or active ambassador easy to be welcomed into decisions whenever possible in the given organisational structure. In this way, the power over the development of the programme is allocated to those who are willing to invest time and effort.

The AFD programme is to the trainers a 'nerdy lab' where various dialogical approaches can be explored and tried out together with the ambassadors, who generally have a high level of trust towards trainers and the learning space. The development of the content hence depends partly on 'experiments' and refinement based on managements' assessment and ambassadors' feedback.

Ambassadors from previous phases have felt some frustration due to the feeling that their opinions were not considered in the structure and content of the programme. This issue has since been addressed. As a result, ambassadors from later phases feel that they have 'been heard' and are generally pleased with the content and structure. A downside to this very flexible structure can be the feeling of inconsistency when the themes of the seminars change in a way that to ambassadors feel arbitrary.



Intentions and desired outcome for a training seminar in Egypt

A participatory and interactive approach

The demand for more practical training lends itself to the participatory and interactive approach of the programme, which is indeed received well by the ambassadors. The programme has from the very beginning had a high participatory level and a large element of interactivity in both the training and in workshops. The DIIS report from 2010 showed that a determining factor for the success among workshop participants was the combination of interactive methods, openness and ambassadors' willingness to share private experiences in the creation of a space for dialogue characterized by honesty and trust.⁵⁴ The programme has further developed strategically upon this idea about 'dialogue as a participatory tool' in which the interactive dialogue exercises and the openness and frankness of the ambassadors play a crucial role.⁵⁵ Senior trainers currently work with approaches inspired by co-active coaching, appreciative inquiry and participatory leadership.⁵⁶

The participatory and interactive approach of the AFD programme is what creates a learning environment stretching from non-formal education over participatory education and to informal learning. It creates for the ambassadors a learning environment resembling a *community of practice*.

Although the learning of the ambassadors is an individual process, it needs to be seen in the social context in which they are situated. Learning hence becomes a social process. Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger speak of 'situated learning' in which individual's learning involves a process of engagement in 'communities of practice'.⁵⁷ These communities are everywhere and the ambassadors are, as are the rest of us, involved in a number of them: the international team being one, the national teams, families and friends, colleagues, university, organisations being others, just to give a few examples. In some communities of practice, we are core members and in others we are more at the margin.

As a community of practice the AFD learning environment can be defined with Wenger's words: 'Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.'⁵⁸ Key to a community of practice is that its members share a commitment to a domain – in this case a dialogical culture - it builds relationships that enable participants to learn from each other, and it involves a shared practice.⁵⁹ In the case of the AFD programme the shared practice is made up of many elements, e.g. the practical and participatory elements of the training seminars, intercultural teamwork and workshop facilitation. In this way the programme bases its approach on the understanding that learning is embedded in practice. As the Danish ambassador and volunteer trainer Faruq puts it, a large part of the AFD programme can be seen as qualified 'learning by doing'; through the workshops, designing and facilitating them, dealing with changes as they appear, being exposed to different perspectives, having an open and curious mind-set all the while and - very importantly - sharing the experiences with the

⁵⁴ DIIS 2010

⁵⁵ DUF 2010: 4-5

⁵⁶ See e.g. Kimsey-House et al. 2011, Cooperride et al 2011 and www.artofhosting.org

⁵⁷ Lave & Wenger 1991

⁵⁸ Wenger-Trayner 2015

⁵⁹ Smith 2009

community of ambassadors. However, precisely the social context of the ambassadors is what makes ‘situated learning’ more than just ‘learning by doing’;⁶⁰ it is not just the ‘doing’ but the ‘situated doing’ that makes all the difference.

A central element to learning seen as situated activity is the process of *legitimate peripheral participation*. Because learning takes place through a process of co-participation in social relationship, it is not so much that learners acquire new ‘structures’, but rather that they participate in frameworks that have this ‘structure’.⁶¹ Participation here refers not just to engaging in certain activities with certain people, but also to a process of being active participant in certain *practices* and construct *identities* in relation to these communities.⁶² Hence, when ambassadors enter the community of AFD they are novices in the world of dialogue, and, although they are thrown head first into training, their participation is on the periphery. From the periphery they learn, all the while the things they are involved in and the tasks they do initially may be less key to the community than others. As their engagement deepens and they become more competent through their involvement in the AFD, they will become full participants in the community – they move from ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ to ‘full participation’.⁶³ As described in chapter 4 ambassadors with time construct their identities due to their participation in the AFD programme and begin feeling ‘part of’ the community.

In this way legitimate peripheral participation is a way to speak about the relation between newcomers and old-timers that relates itself to the idea of *apprenticeship*.⁶⁴ In some parts of the AFD programme there is a strong presence of peer-to-peer learning in which knowledge and skill are transferred from older ambassadors to newer ambassadors. The structure of the AFD programme, which enables ambassadors to participate in several phases, as well as the national teams transferring knowledge between members ensures a learning environment where legitimate peripheral participation and gradually enskillment through apprenticeship can take place.⁶⁵

The amount of peer-to-peer based learning is, according to the international survey respondents, sufficient.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Lave & Wenger 1991: 31

⁶¹ Smith 2009

⁶² Wenger 1998: 4

⁶³ Lave & Wenger 1991: 37

⁶⁴ Lave & Wenger 1991

⁶⁵ Ingold 2000

⁶⁶ 12 would like to increase the peer-to-peer based learning, 12 would like it to stay the same, 2 would like it to decrease and 4 says it was ‘not part of my AFD experience’.



Senior trainer Jesper Bastholm Munk speaking to the circle of ambassadors



Ambassadors engaged in a dialogue exercise at a training seminar in Egypt

A trustful, personal learning space

During sessions ambassadors are sat on chairs placed in a circle, tables removed to the sides of the room, and the focus and energy is centred on the shared space. Most shared sessions begin with a check-in, where all ambassadors 'enter the learning space' by saying a few words, e.g. how they feel or their expectations about the session. Similarly it ends with a check-out that signifies that ambassadors leave the learning space. The circle is one that the group constantly returns to e.g. to share the results of a group exercise. Here everyone can have eye contact and the ambassadors treat it as a reflective and philosophical space, where they with great interest and respect interact with one another and the trainers. Senior and junior trainers play the role as facilitators and mentors.

The training is consciously working on personal development of the ambassador and uses an approach that asks ambassadors to invest themselves in the topics. This is done, both to let the ambassadors get to know each other well and because it is believed that the inner and outer dialogue is related. A Danish ambassador describes the rationale behind:

When you develop within yourself, you also go back and influence your surroundings. ... It's just like rings in the water moving outwards. So we become wiser, and understand ourselves better, and the others better, and with the dialogical tools and skills we can affect our surroundings actually by using it in real life.

Faruq, international ambassador and volunteer trainer from Denmark

As previously mentioned, the personal development and transformation caused by the programme is one of the prime motivators for ambassadors to stay in the programme.

This personal investment creates a very trustful, personal space, in which ambassadors feel safe to share deep, philosophical, inner thoughts. The mutual trust between ambassadors is a very positive trait to many ambassadors, as they feel that it creates a learning space unlike any other space in their life. One Danish ambassador describes how he has been looking forward to this since last seminar, as it is almost addictive. Many ambassadors find it important to have this space within the AFD programme, where they are challenged and can develop personally. Some also say that it is not something that necessarily can be fully controlled. However, according to ambassadors the personal aspect has increased from phase 3 to phase 4.

This very personal, trustful space also means that sessions sometimes resemble emotional sharing sessions. Many ambassadors find the personal aspect of the training useful, but many also find that it is only useful to a certain extent. A Jordanian ambassador says that bringing in personal aspects related to the project can be beneficial as it creates a safe space. But when the training becomes 'group therapy', as he calls it, and everyone becomes 'sad and miserable instead of focusing on the task', it becomes 'too much'. Sharing is, as all other activities in the AFD, in theory possible to opt out of. But as an ambassador says, this will be 'frowned upon' due to group dynamics. If you participate in the sharing without sharing something on your own, you will have 'gained something without being part of this gaining process'. The intense sharing sessions also leads to that some ambassadors find the AFD resembling a sect.

The tendency of training sessions getting too personal and reminding too much of group therapy is a topic that the management and trainers are aware of. On the first day of the most recent training seminar, the third of phase 4, the trainers through a session addressed the issue. The session had as its objective to clarify that there are three levels on which you can engage in dialogue: the private, personal and professional. Here ambassadors were explicitly told that they are in the AFD programme to deliver good workshops, and although they should engage themselves in the dialogue, they need to keep their private lives and 'open wounds' outside the learning space. In the AFD setting the aim is personal and professional development, so when conducting dialogue in the setting of AFD, ambassadors should stick to the personal and professional levels. The immediate reactions were signs of confusion, but later on many ambassadors found this divide useful – especially those who had disliked the large amount of sharing in the earlier training seminars. However, some also found this change in demands frustrating. An Egyptian ambassador describes that she felt 'mind fucked' as they had previously been asked to self-reflect and dig deep personally and now afterwards was told to focus only on the bigger picture. In this case the ambassador would like to see a higher consistency between the seminars, in terms of the level of sharing expected by ambassadors.

Interestingly, although the learning space of the seminar is portrayed as extremely personal and trustful, several Danish ambassadors describe how they are not truly being themselves, but rather a political and 'dialogical correct' version. Mads explains the two types of correctness:

Political correctness is because there are topics that we cannot touch upon and being honest about all the time. Dialogical correctness is more on a tool level and is more an ethical question; is it okay to fake it when somebody is actually telling you something very personal?

Mads, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

The political correctness comes from an understanding of the necessity to be gentle when speaking about certain issues – such as gender equalities, religion, politics and sexuality - that to some of the participants may be offensive. The dialogical correctness is a by-product of the dialogical tools and attitudes taught to the ambassadors but not yet incorporated in them. Sometimes this rendered personality and the 'fake dialogical attitude' that ambassadors put on during training and at workshops is actually conducive to the ambassadors' transformation. They reach a stage where they do not have to fake it any longer or they experience that workshop participants have a fruitful dialogue notwithstanding their 'fake' dialogical performance. In these cases the 'fake it till you make it'-attitude that is sometimes suggested by trainers, actually work.

Another side of being 'dialogical correct' means that ambassadors, in order to present themselves as acceptable in the AFD context, leave out information about themselves or constrain themselves in conversation, because certain things are not acceptable to say or be within the group of ambassadors. These constraints go both ways in the group of ambassadors, but are primarily expressed by the Danish ambassadors. A Danish ambassador explains how she feels she has to hide parts of her personality, because she is afraid to be judged by the Arab participants:

So even in the ambassadors group... so I have a new girlfriend, ... and I didn't tell any of the... I told one of the Arab ambassadors, and that is one that I trust very much. And it took me, 10 days to say that. So even in that setting, where we say we are being so personal and sharing so much, I did not feel comfortable sharing. So that's yeah – and that's also one of the things that when you say these things: "oh, we become human beings". But I'm still not totally me. And when it is verbalized like that, when it's verbalised like a room where we can all just be whoever we are, you have to be really considerate that there might be people in there who don't feel that way. Who don't fit into that ...setting, because there is something about them that... I think that if I had been there a longer time, and... but I think it's just not easy. Sometimes we talk about it like it's a given, but it takes time to build trust. It does. It takes time to be fully who you are.

Stine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

In this example, Stine felt she had to conceal personal information about her sexuality, because she did not trust the reactions of the group. She continues to say that she did not feel sad having to do so, but nevertheless the example serves very well to illustrate the 'masked' personalities that are presented to the intercultural group. There is however examples of a Danish homosexual participant being open about his sexuality within the group, although not at workshops conducted in the Middle East.

But not only the Danish ambassadors feels that they have to 'wear a dialogical mask', as a Danish ambassador calls it, where they will not talk about e.g. alcohol and sexuality. Also the Arab ambassadors find that there are things that cannot be expressed in the group and some feel a hierarchy of values. Two Danish ambassadors with Arab background says:

Some people talk about that they felt like that they had to hide their own opinions because that they couldn't truly be themselves, and that that wasn't really in the spirit of the AFD project. And there was this, it seemed like some opinions were forced from Denmark, as being the right, correct opinions. It's interesting for me, because I didn't feel like that at all.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

I just felt sometimes that because I'm Danish and Arabic, I know them both, I felt sometimes that when I had conversations alone with the Arabs as an Arab girl they would say stuff that they never said when there was a Danish Arabic interaction, because they had both the hierarchy thing, but also the whole dignity Arabic thing, they don't want to lose the face and they don't want to expose their country. They don't want to expose their women, they don't want to expose their gender, all these things of airs and honour aspect. ... I could dig deeper because I knew from my own background how it was and they would say, "I mean, we don't like what's happening to women", but when we had sessions nobody would mention it.

Donya, international ambassador from Denmark, pilot phase and phase 2

As a Danish programme, with Danish senior trainers, teaching fundamental Danish and Hal Koch-inspired values of dialogue and democracy, furthermore funded as part of DAPP, there will, in the AFD, be an inherent challenge of hierarchy. Danish values will inevitably create a backdrop for everyone – ambassadors as well as coordinators - to act against, but the Danish ambassadors will, as Tarek expresses, typically not realise this fact. Therefore the occasional outburst from the Arab ambassadors comes as a surprise to Danish ambassadors. An example comes from the evaluation of phase 4 that begun with a questioning about funding and ended with a dialogue about the gap between Danish and Arab ambassadors, a feeling of

hierarchy as well as idealised Western values in Middle Eastern society. Although the AFD teaches to accept differences, the solution seems to be, to create the much acclaimed common ground where both parts - some more than others - leave certain differences, topics and elements unexplored in order to secure the dialogue.



Ambassadors engaged in a dialogue exercise at a training seminar in Egypt

Dialogue exercises

As stated above, participatory education plays a large role in the AFD. Already in the pilot project the 'corner game' and the 'assumptions game' were highlighted in all three countries as activities, which gave participants 'food for thought'.⁶⁷ Dialogue exercises continue to play a major role in the programme and in the learning process of the ambassadors.

Building on the participatory and interactive approach, all 30 survey respondents find their own participation in dialogue exercises to have a very positive impact on their learning⁶⁸ and 70% of the survey respondents would like to see an increased focus on dialogue exercises, techniques and methods.⁶⁹ International, as well as national, ambassadors repeatedly

⁶⁷ DUF 2010: 4

⁶⁸ 20 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact' and 1 'little positive impact'.

⁶⁹ 21 would like to increase the focus on dialogue exercises while 8 would like it to stay the same. 23 would like to increase the focus on dialogue techniques and methods, while 6 would like it to stay the same and 1 would like to decrease the focus.

mention a number of games and exercises they have found particularly beneficial to their own learning, as well as in situations where they have facilitated dialogue. These are all found in the Dialogue Handbook – a book that has been mentioned by an international ambassador from Egypt as the biggest impact of the entire programme, due to its form that enables people to read it and benefit from it, even without taking part in a workshop.

The dialogue exercises that ambassadors – both international and national - mention most often to have had a big impact on their learning are described below, combining words of The Dialogue Handbook and words of the ambassadors:

Talking stick – An exercise that ‘practices the essence of the nature of dialogue. It is inspired by the practice of certain tribes who hold an object in their hands while they address an assembly. When calling upon somebody else to speak, the object is passed on to them. The exercise is concrete and at the same time gives participants deeper insight into dialogue and understanding of the differences between dialogue and discussion.’⁷⁰

This is a tool we use, which is very simple. It teaches you how to listen to the person in front of you and understand him. We use this tool, when people start being unable to "see" each other and hear each other. I can use this tool, to hear what the person in front of me has to say and understand him, but it doesn't have to mean that he convinces me. But it can make me understand why he is where is, and why I am where I am.

Omar, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

Many ambassadors are very fond of this exercise, in which two persons have a dialogue as they together hold the *talking stick* – this can be any object, a pen for instance. One person holds the object while stating her opinion. Hereafter the other person takes hold of the object and mirrors the expressed opinion. They both hold on to the talking stick until the first person confirms that her opinion has been 100% correctly represented. Hereafter the other person gets to express his opinion and the procedure is repeated.

Brain swap game - An exercise that ‘puts participants in someone else’s shoes. By being open-minded about other people's outlook, you gain greater insight into their viewpoints. It fosters understanding of why others have an opinion different from your own, and how this can be accepted, even if you do not necessarily agree.’⁷¹

It's a game where you stand in one place and adopt a certain stand point, and then you go stand in another place and adopt an opposing stand point and argue the case for that stand point. It was a really great experience; I couldn't believe what was happening. When Rana first told us about the exercise I asked her: "how do you expect me to argue the case for a view point that I don't actually agree with?" I couldn't grasp the idea, but she told us, to take it easy and try it out. I really liked the idea of that game. And when I tried to apply it on other situations in real life, and put myself in other people's shoes, and think about that that "other" must be partly right, and not all what he says is wrong. Or at least it's right from that other persons' point of view. This was one of the things that made the biggest impression on me from the very first day. I always like to use that exercise when I'm myself facilitating a workshop for others. It's always one of the activities I do in my

⁷⁰ DUF 2012: 181

⁷¹ DUF 2012: 162

workshops, and I try to use it in real life. We also often discuss it when we meet as ambassadors every other week. We always agree that it should be one of the activities we always implement.

Fatma, national ambassador in Egypt since 2013

Corner game - An exercise that ‘highlights how we have different views, and how values and emotions underlie our opinions. It serves to explain what dialogue is and to conduct one in practice around a subject that is close to participants hearts.’⁷²

In the beginning, at least in my phase, the first couple of days we were thrown into the corner game. And it's the most interesting thing I've ever experienced: fighting and shouting. We have this corner game, so you raise a question, and usually it's a bit controversial and then in this case it was a the 2nd or 3rd day. ... And we had talked about dialogue, and conflict and dialogue, and discussion, what is dialogue.. yep, you know this. And then they asked something in the line of “would you marry someone from another religion” - to us the participants. And then they had four questions representing a corner each. One saying of course, one saying never, one saying only if my children will have the same faith as me, one saying whatever... and we... there was a clear division through the room of who was saying yes and no, and there was shouting and fingers pointing. And it was so interesting, because afterwards it was like – ok, this was actually really embarrassing. But there, all of us learned so much because we were thrown into it.

Tanja, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 2

Assumption game - An exercise that ‘is well suited to conduct a dialogue on prejudice. Through their own experiences, participants get a taste of how prejudice works in practice. The facilitators put themselves on the line, thus applying the dialogical principles of trust, openness, honesty and equality.’⁷³

The assumption game was one of the things I really enjoyed. And at the same time it delivers a message so fast. Most of the time we do it in the beginning of the session at the workshop, before we introduce ourselves. And we kind of turn up in the room and ask the participants to write these things about us. We do it in different ways. We present 9 facts if you are 3, 3 for each. And we let them chose what fit each of us. And actually the results are... worth to look at. We talk about it: “so why did you chose this”?

Magdi, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

These four exercises are all part of a category of exercises that are meant to ‘challenge through dialogue’. They provide ambassadors with both a better understanding of the concept of dialogue and provides them with methods to better understand and accept differences, underlying values and stereotypes – both their own and others.

Teamwork

Another significant learning space is that of the intercultural teams, in which the international ambassadors are divided during the training seminars. A team consists of four ambassadors: one Egyptian, one Jordanian and two Danes – one with Arab and/or Muslim

⁷² DUF 2102: 156

⁷³ Named the prejudice game in The Dialogue Handbook.

background and one with ethnic majority background. In these teams the ambassadors plan for and conduct the intercultural dialogue workshops, and thus they spend a considerable amount of time together. As it is believed that teammates need to know each other well - each others strengths, weaknesses and points of views - to be able to carry out successful workshops, ambassadors are also given assignments during the training seminar and are encouraged to engage with each other during informal activities.

Ambassadors consider these diverse teams an important learning space and all 30 survey respondents say that working in these teams has had a positive impact on their personal learning experience.⁷⁴ The intercultural teams are one of the only learning spaces, which are clearly connected to a learning point of the programme: ambassadors say that working in these diverse teams has taught them to work in intercultural and diverse setting. They learn to overcome differences and communicate in order to facilitate workshops, and a high level of trust is created within the team. An Egyptian ambassador describe the challenges of working in a diverse team:

When I travelled to Denmark to meet for the first time the international team, the Jordanians and Danes, and we were working together in a team of four... we were supposed to work together planning the workshop, but actually this meeting itself was a learning point. Because it's not easy, four different people coming for four different backgrounds and different cultures. To put everything aside and agree on one goal – that was hard and a learning in itself. Teamwork and being alongside with different people with different background, different cultures, different visions, it's not easy. You need to be tolerant, to accept different ideas, to put aside your stereotypes and to work on one ultimate goal to make your plan. Yes, so most of the learning came from working in the team itself, the teamwork. Yes, I remember the meetings to prepare for the workshops. It wasn't easy at all.

Interviewer: Did you have a lot of conflict?

Yes it happened. But actually this is how we learned, and in order to do our planning, to go to schools and high-schools, and about dialogue, we ourselves have to learn dialogue – what really it is...

Magdi, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

The teams are learning spaces, where ambassadors feel the cultural differences and language barriers first hand as they have to work together on planning and facilitating workshops. Through this practice they are forced to find a common ground within the group, and use their dialogical skills. An interesting tendency shows that the three countries are often placed on a scale of 'strictness', Denmark being 'really strict' and Egypt 'not strict', with Jordan placed somewhere in the middle. The matter of being accurate/punctual vs. flexible is one that many ambassadors speak about as a source to challenges in the teams, e.g. the amount of 'detail and words' team members will want to put on a workshop programme. Some Jordanians have been surprised about how different they felt from their Egyptian teammates and how alike they feel to their Danish teammates. Others do not share this opinion. The

⁷⁴ 23 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact' and 7 'some positive impact'.

important point is that ambassadors have learned to see nuances; although you share religion, language and background, it does not necessarily make you the same:

Even the Danes with Arabic background or Middle Eastern background, they were different. Yeah, we are both descending from Arabic origins, but both of us have different ... I would say character, different opinions. Maybe we share the same religion, but we practice in different ways. ... Yeah, we are Arab, but we're different. We are not just exactly the same. And when you're saying he's Danish, not all Danes are the same exact point of view about everything. ... You can see something in common and or something totally different and it's regardless of the nationality.

Leyla, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

Ambassadors are through their personal relations made to see the person beyond their own assumptions, and are through the individual personalities brought together in the team given the chance of learning from each other on a personal level. Hamza, a Jordanian ambassador, says:

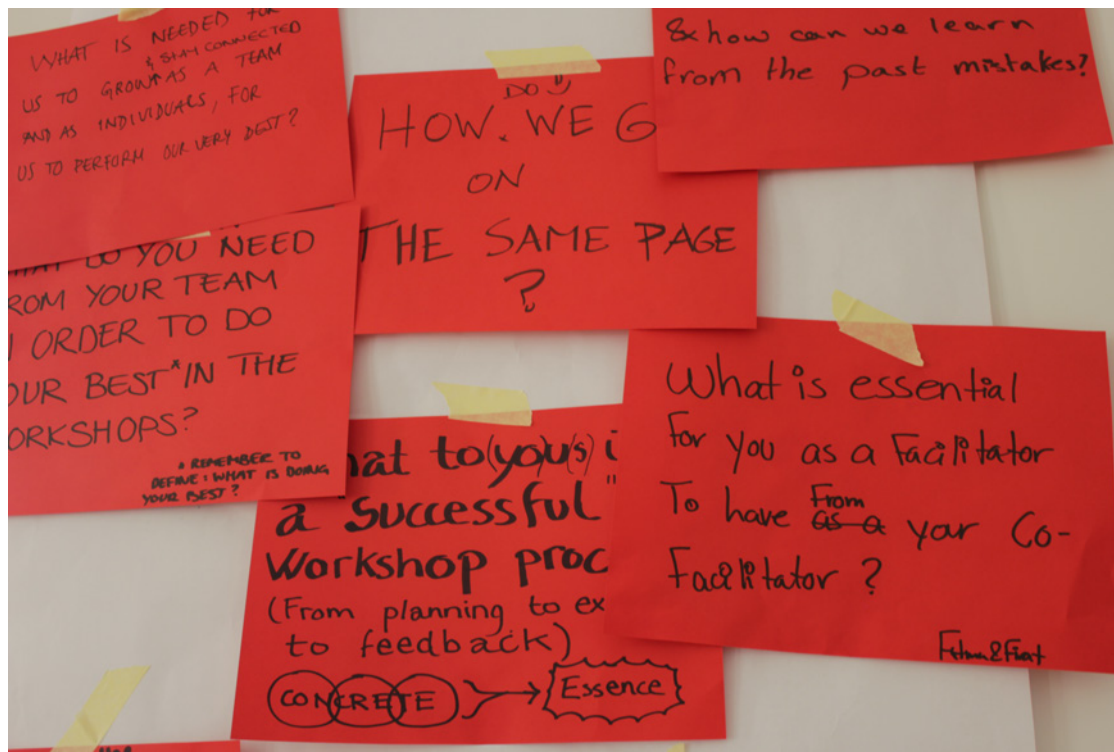
I learned many things from everyone. From Khadija I learned how to be accurate in dialogue, from Donya I learned how to be passionate and having two mother countries. From Salma how to be a woman fighting in the Middle East to create her opportunity. From Oscar ... how to have the ... technical and theoretic components in your life.

Hamza, international ambassador from Jordan, pilot phase and phase 2

In this way the intercultural teams are giving the ambassadors a chance to meet young people, who they can connect with, and in this way, gain a deeper understanding of the personal lives, opinions and views of youth from the other participating countries.

The successful experiences, e.g. when a team conduct an impactful workshop, are important to the ambassadors, but conflicts in the teams are not uncommon and can create learning spaces too. Tarek, a Danish ambassador says: *I think definitely that I learn the most when things go sour, when things don't work, because then you know that you have something to work on.* As an example a Jordanian ambassador had a serious conflict with a Danish teammate, but they had to manage and keep working together throughout the phase. Although it was hard, the Jordanian ambassador had to try to understand the Danish ambassador's opinion and the conflict taught him self-control, patience and tolerance.

Many teams find it difficult to cope with each other at first, but use the tools that they learn, e.g. the iceberg that teaches ambassadors to move on from their immediate impressions of their teammates, in order to better understand what lies beyond the surface of differences. The teams invest time in each other and therefore, when new teams are occasionally made mid-phase, ambassadors worry that it will all be lost. However, several ambassadors find to their own surprise that the new teams are a success and not as difficult to work in, as the old team were in the beginning. As an ambassador says, this could either be the outcome of the programme, or a development of the ambassadors.



Teambuilding exercise



Bags packed for conducting workshops in Egypt

Planning and facilitating workshops

Intercultural workshops, conducted during the last half of each 10day stay in a country, are another major learning space highly praised by ambassadors. The learning space goes two ways benefitting both primary target groups. The intercultural workshops are where young people from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark are taught *about* and *through* dialogue. Hence, together with the national workshops, this is one of the most important elements of the AFD framework for creating dialogue *outside* the programme. However, facilitating workshops is not just the very purpose of the AFD programme, but also a learning lab for the facilitating ambassadors, where they too get to engage in dialogue with the participants. In fact it can be discussed whether the impact of the workshops is primarily on the participants or on the ambassadors.

The impact on workshop participants is not included in this impact study. However, when international ambassadors are asked about whether the workshops primarily impact themselves or the participants, the majority says: both. As a Jordanian ambassador puts it; *“some of the participants affected me and I affected some of the participants”*. Yet many ambassadors do think that the primarily impact is on the ambassadors due to their much longer involvement. As described above, the balance between internal and external impact and the tendency of the programme to be too self-indulging – i.e. too much about the personal development of the ambassadors - has recently been addressed.

To facilitate workshops has had a positive impact on all 30 survey respondents⁷⁵ and many ambassadors describe how the workshops are incredibly important to their own learning, because this is where they get to use, try out and apply everything they have learned in the training seminar. Mads, a Danish ambassador also say that the workshops are the motivating factor for ambassadors to change themselves and ‘get good’ at the things taught in the training: *you know that in five days you’re going to be on the floor on a workshop. Then afterwards in retrospect you see “oh, I also changed myself for the sake of changing myself”*.

Workshops are planned, typically day-to-day, by the teams with supervision from the trainers. This is another exercise in teamwork, where ambassador learn to be really ‘sharp’ on what the outcome of the workshop should be and how they are to reach this point. An ambassador says: *“there was a guideline for us to develop ... this is the most effective tool I know, and I still remember 100% of the process.”*

Facilitating workshops teaches ambassadors various facilitation skills: to instruct, train and teach people, how to facilitate, how to talk about things, how to moderate. When facilitating workshops, ambassadors are not always met by what they expected and not always with positive reactions. Ambassadors say that they learned to overcome this challenge and be flexible in the situation, if they ‘read’ that the group needs something different than planned. An ambassador describes the workshops as a learning space in this way:

The workshops were actually a learning process on its own. Because you know, not two workshops are the same. So sometimes we have planned our workshop some way and then we ... find some sort of surprise. Maybe the participant number is very low ... maybe there is no much space in the

⁷⁵ 27 respondents find it to have a ‘very positive impact’ and 3 ‘some positive impact’.

room for attendants to walk around during activities. So you have to change your plans in the last minute. ... I must say that one thing we learn from this situation is that you have to be flexible and you have to have different plans. And if you don't have like different things you have to create something on the spot.

Mohab, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2

Ambassadors also learn that when facilitating it can be necessary for them to be neutral and hold back their own feelings in order to give workshop participants space to express themselves. A Jordanian ambassador says:

It was very, very difficult, but I learned how to control myself and to listen to other peoples opinions even though I don't like that, but maybe I will get something out of it. And even if I do not get anything out of it, I'm still a facilitator and I have to be (as) neutral as possible and to protect all participants to be equal in the room.

Leyla, international Ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

This neutrality, which can be necessary for facilitating, is interestingly related to the way ambassadors present and introduces themselves at workshops. As already described, ambassadors tend to present a 'dialogically correct' versions of themselves, which too applies to the workshops. Intercultural workshops are conducted in order to fulfil the main objectives of the programme: to foster a dialogical culture among youth and enhance mutual understanding between youth in the participating countries. To improve the likeliness of ambassadors finding a 'common ground' between themselves and the participants, they will often downplay or enhance elements of their personalities. E.g. will a Dane typically present herself as 'Christian, but not going to church' rather than non-religious, since it is believed that Muslim participants will find it easier to relate. In return the intercultural and social aspect of facilitating workshops in different countries and various social groups and the workshops participants' reactions are also teaching the ambassadors a lot. An example comes from an Egyptian ambassador, who describes how his prejudices and stereotypes were challenged due to the workshops he facilitated: facilitating in Denmark taught him a lot about the culture here, and facilitating an open and qualified dialogue in a poor area in Egypt taught him not to judge based on social and educational standards. This created not only insight into another country in the programme, but also the ambassadors own country.

A majority of the survey respondents would like to see an increased focus on the facilitation of international workshops, in order to create an ideal learning experience.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ 19 would like to increase the focus while 10 would like it to stay the same. 1 would like it to decrease.



Teams planning for workshops in Egypt



A team receives feedback on a planned workshop

Feedback on workshops

After every workshop follow reflection, an internal evaluation in the team and in some cases teams will receive feedback from senior or junior trainers. 25 of the 30 the survey respondents find that this evaluation has had some or very positive impact on their learning.⁷⁷ These are also the ambassadors who describe to have received ‘a lot of feedback’ from senior trainers, while the very few ambassadors, who find that it has had no or even little negative impact simultaneously are those who have received ‘little feedback’. This suggests a clear correlation between the impact and amount of feedback given from trainers. The focus on feedback from senior trainers could, according to the majority of the survey respondents, be increased to create a better learning environment.⁷⁸

An example of a positive experience with reflection, which is done both in smaller groups with one or two teams and as shared sessions, comes from an international Jordanian ambassador, who, when asked about the most important learning space of the AFD programme, promptly says:

I think I would say the post-session (workshop) reflection... Because, I mean, even when you look at it from your perspective, you applied (the workshop) and then you have your own feedback, but there is a lot of points you miss because your mind filters a lot of information because of your perspectives and values. And you couldn't objectively evaluate anything. But then in the reflection meeting, we go through each exercise; how did it go, what could have gone better? And that's where I had my 'aha' moments. It's like, even on my own feedback I learned that I'm filtering a lot of evaluation information that I don't really get without reflecting with other team members. So, we saw each other working from the outside.

Khalid, International Ambassador from Jordan, phase 2

Another ambassador speak positively about the feedback on workshops given by trainers:

My entire workshop would actually be less of a success if we didn't have time to have it evaluated by the trainers. And what I hated is when you had the trainer who said: just evaluate on it yourself. "But could I have done something better". "Learning is your process, not my process!" Cos, what really helped for me was when they said, "this worked so great or this... maybe I'd done it differently, but you managed to save it in the moment." Those evaluation sessions with one trainer and the group, those were the highlight of my day every time after we had a workshop. And I really... I was bummed if we didn't manage to find the time.

Stine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Very few ambassadors dislike the evaluation and find that it has even had a negative impact on their learning. An example of this is Heba, an international ambassador from Denmark. She says:

I was happy that didn't have it. Because I've only had bad experiences with the evaluation with the trainers. We did some workshops where we had the trainers, and they were like "yes you did very

⁷⁷ 17 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 8 'some positive impact', 2 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact', 1 'little negative impact' and 1 say it was 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁷⁸ 19 would like to increase the focus while 10 would like it to stay the same. 1 does not consider it a part of their AFD experience.

well, it was a success, I don't have any comments at all". Its like – so why were you here? Another time, it was this tool that was used to evaluate: only say the good things, or whatever, about what happened. And something really bad happen and you didn't get the... the trainer didn't let us address what just happened. And we were all just so sad and annoyed, and I was so close to crying. But we couldn't... we were told only to say the good things. And I can see why they did it. But it was not working for me. So I didn't like the evaluations after that. I need to have my time in the car from a to b to just let it sink in and later on we can talk about it.

Heba, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

What Heba here addresses is the 'appreciative' approach that the programme applies, at times with a frustrating outcome.

Only during phase three the junior trainers were responsible for this feedback on workshops. Hence, only a limited number of ambassadors have experienced this. To the majority of those survey respondents who did experienced junior trainers feedback as part of their training, it has had some or very positive impact on their learning.⁷⁹ This again correlates with the ambassadors who describe that they have received 'some feedback'.

Informal socialising and dialogue with other ambassadors

While all the above-described learning spaces enable ambassadors' learning in the non-formal and participatory educational setting of the training programme, there are also elements and situations during the intercultural training, which can be characterized as informal learning spaces. These are the social situations that happen *in-between* and *after* the official programme ends for the day – during breaks, meals and the day off, which is part of each training seminar. It could be considered a by-product of the planned, non-formal training, which is the centre of attention, but these social situations proves important as independent self-directed learning spaces.⁸⁰ In fact the informal spaces are, according to trainer Gry Guldberg, who continuously observes and assess the ambassadors, the true dialogical spaces. This is where it becomes visible whether dialogue and topics taught in the session 'sink in'.

29 of the 30 survey respondents say that spending time off with other nationalities has had positive impact or some positive impact on their personal learning.⁸¹ The Danish ambassador Donya says that the friendships formed by AFD exceeds any session in depth. She calls them '*a continued dialogue session in my mind*' because '*the personal bond ... actually made us real and not just dialogical.*'

Egyptian ambassador Mohab too describes the '*interaction with ambassadors outside of the sessions and the work*' as the most important learning space. Especially memorable is the experience of celebrating Eid in Denmark, together with his team, who all decided to fast together, although one of the teammates was not a Muslim. Her curiosity and willingness to

⁷⁹ 9 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 7 'some positive impact', 1 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact', and 12 say 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁸⁰ Rogers 2004

⁸¹ 21 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 6 'some positive impact', 2 'little positive impact' and 1 say 'not part of my AFD experience'.

try the Islamic tradition made a large impression. To learn from the other ambassadors' personal learning experiences and to share experiences with each other was what made the learning space impactful.

Also spending time together in each other's homes, to see e.g. how Danes live, experience family relations and family structure is a learning point. Another Egyptian ambassador tells how, when visiting Jordan, her Jordanian teammate took the team around to different places in the city:

We would talk together about the places and we just like, had this day together gathering us as a team and doing what we wanted. So it also helped us like build the capacity of the team together, so it was very nice. In Denmark it was also the same, in Egypt it was also the same. So having a day together with the team in their own country, it was great, so it helped us like understand each other better.

Salma, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

Here the intercultural aspect of spending time with someone in his or her own society – not inside the training room - plays an important role. Evenings are also typically where ambassadors find time to engage in dialogue with each other outside of the official programme. 25 of the 30 survey respondents find this element to have a very or somewhat positive impact on their learning.⁸²

When asked about the most important learning space of the programme, three international ambassadors say:

I think it is about the dinners. The dinners and then the night talks, like we stayed up, we didn't sleep, we had discussions. We were really interested in talking to each other. This was where I really learned. Learning about people and talking and discussing the ideas. So the whole informal space. ... We discussed everything. Religion, politics, but also more private things. We also discussed a lot about women, the Arab World. This was something very interesting for the Danes for example to discuss. Like being a woman in Egypt, marriage. We discussed a lot about marriage.

Sofia, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 2

In the first phase I felt where I learned most was actually just late night talks with other ambassadors, and I didn't know anybody from the Middle East before joining the project. So just getting to know other people and hearing other perspectives and stuff like that... yeah, that was what pushed a lot of my own development.

Jacob, international ambassador and junior trainer from Denmark

I think for me the most important type of learning is the personal learning that we have in the breaks, because it is a very intense schedule when we are away, ... so when we actually have breaks and we have time, then we actually kind of engage in dialogue with each other, with the ambassadors. And I think that's the type of personal learning that I really learn most from, because it's something where I know that both, or all four or five that are engaged in the conversations all have these principles in their heads so we are all aware of these things and we're conscious about

⁸² 18 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 7 'some positive impact', 2 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

it. We're trying to have a dialogue and we have something personal on stake, because we will be talking about some topic that's very personal to someone or something that's very controversial or something that we have very different views about. Because we are very different people in the programme, some of us are Jordanians, some are Palestinian, some are Egyptians or Christian Egyptians, and some of us are Danes and some are Danes with Middle Eastern background, so we are very different people with very different experiences. So once we actually have time to engage in dialogue with each other and we all have something personal at stake. That is when I feel like I learn the most.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

A majority of the survey respondents say that they would like to see an increased focus on both time spent off with other nationalities and dialogue with other ambassadors, in order to create a more ideal learning experience.⁸³



Ambassadors taking a walk during a training seminar in Denmark

⁸³ 18 would like to increase the focus on time spend off with other nationalities while 12 would like it to stay the same. 19 would like to increase the focus on dialogue with other ambassadors while 10 would like it to stay the same. 1 would like it to decrease.

Engaging with trainers and coordinators

During the training seminar ambassadors engage with coordinators and in particular trainers as part of the official programme during the day. While coordinators are present throughout the day, often observing or working behind the circle of ambassadors, trainers are teaching the ambassadors and thus engage with them more directly.

Due to the friendly environment of the training and the setup of the programme, where everyone stays in the same hotel and eats most meals together, the ambassadors' engagement with trainers and coordinators could potentially fall in the same category as the informal socialising between the ambassadors themselves. Yet, the ambassadors' engagement with trainers and coordinators resembles rather a student/teacher relationship and does not have the same level of impact in terms of learning. This being said, 20 of the 30 international survey respondents still find that engaging with trainers has had some or very positive impact⁸⁴, while 19 says that engaging with coordinators has had some or very positive impact.⁸⁵

A couple of ambassadors find their engagement with the coordinator to have had no or negative impact on their learning, and there is among some ambassadors, particularly the Danes, a strong negative feeling towards the hierarchy that they find exist between the ambassadors and the coordinating team. The role of the coordinators during the training seminars is unclear to ambassadors, and the coordinators often exclude themselves from the ambassadors in social settings, appear absent or constantly assessing the ambassadors' progress, which makes some ambassadors nervous. Some ambassadors also criticise the amount of sharing that is expected from them, while coordinators, and trainers to some extent, are very 'closed'.

Although the ambassadors, who are critical of the role of the coordinators, see an improvement during the last years, there may be a well-functioning dialogical 'backstage' among the trainers and coordinators, while it can still be questioned whether the current learning environment is truly dialogical. A Danish ambassador from phase 3 points out that there is not much dialogue in between the three levels of ambassadors, trainers and coordinators; *'even though we try to promote dialogue in each level, there is no 'cross'. This is a shame because it's really sort of the purpose of the project'*. However, there is also an understanding of the necessity for relaxation in the breaks due to the very intense programme. This makes everyone – coordinators, trainers and ambassadors alike – seek the people they are comfortable with. This also means that there is some tendency of nationalities sticking together during breaks, Danes speaking Danish and Jordanian, Egyptians and Arab speaking Danes speaking Arabic. Individual attempts of reminding the group to only use the shared language, English, are not always successful.

However, even the critical ambassadors do find the presence of the coordinators during training seminars useful in terms of feedback and as 'adults' who can help solve problems.

⁸⁴ 12 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 8 'some positive impact', 5 'little positive impact', 2 'no impact' and 3 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁸⁵ 10 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact', 5 'little positive impact', 3 'no impact', 1 'some negative impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

Therefore rather than remove the presence of the coordinators from the training, Danish ambassadors suggest an increased focus on how to ensure a dialogical environment and increased dialogue between the levels of this top-down system. The Jordanian and Egyptian ambassadors generally have no problems with the existing hierarchy, which some even find positive, as it motivates them to strive higher.

According to majority of survey respondents the interaction of ambassadors with senior and junior trainers as well as coordinators is sufficient.⁸⁶

6.2 In-between the intercultural dialogue activities and after the phase(s)

In between the training seminars are a couple of months, where international ambassadors return to their respective countries and carry on with their lives. These can be, but are not necessarily, passive months of the ambassadors' learning process. However, the ambassador has the responsibility for continuous learning, as it largely depends on the ambassadors' own involvement and reflections.

The international ambassadors describe their learning process as curve going up and down – like a 'hike in the hills'. The curve often starts relatively high, as ambassadors find themselves quite clever, capable and very dialogical at first. However, as they gain new knowledge about dialogue they realise that they might not be so dialogical after all and the curve drops drastically. This drop can also be caused by a conflict or frustration. It slowly climbs, but is typically affected by the training seminars, the ambassadors' belief in the programme's cause and their current motivation. The learning curve is for most ambassadors at its highest during the 10 days of intercultural dialogue activities, while it flattens out in between the seminars. There are three primary learning spaces that affect the learning curve during this time.

Firstly, some ambassadors find that the 10 day training seminar needs processing, and they spend time on their own processing impressions, experiences and thoughts. Secondly, all international ambassadors are by default members of the national teams, where meetings are held to support the continuous dialogical practice. They may also have tasks concerning the planning and facilitation of workshops nationally, which also provides ambassadors with a chance to continue engaging within the programme. Thirdly, ambassadors engage with their surrounding world – friends, family, colleagues, study mates, etc. Together this means that although the learning curve dips in between the training seminars, it does, for most ambassadors, never reach zero.

While the activities within the framework of the AFD as well as personal reflection are elements described here, the ambassadors' engagement with the surrounding world is described in the following chapter.

⁸⁶ 14 would like to increase the interaction with senior trainers, 13 would like it to stay the same, 1 would like to decrease it, and 2 says it has not been part of their AFD experience. 12 would like to increase the interaction with junior trainers, 12 would like it to stay the same, 1 would like to decrease it, and 5 says it has not been part of their AFD experience. 10 would like to increase the interaction with coordinators, 15 would like it to stay the same, 3 would like to decrease it, and 2 says it has not been part of their AFD experience.

Engaging with individuals affiliated with AFD

The above-described tendency, of ambassadors benefitting greatly from socialising with other ambassadors, but less from the contact with trainers and coordinators, is repeated in the months between the training seminars. Here, ambassadors travel home to their respective countries, carry on with their everyday life of studies, volunteering and/or work and - some to a larger extent than others - facilitate national dialogue activities. Here, staying in touch with other ambassadors can be considered an important learning space, which the majority of survey respondents find to have a positive impact on their learning.⁸⁷ Staying in touch remains to have a positive impact, also after ambassadors have completed the international phase(s).⁸⁸

Staying in touch happens both at the ambassadors' own initiative and at the AFD programme's initiative. In the learning space that the ambassadors created for themselves, they meet in person or communicate online to reflect together and revisit trainings, experiences and workshops that have happened during the seminars. The only formal setting, which allows this continuous contact is the national work managed by the programme coordinators.

While still having some positive impact, engaging with coordinators does not have the same level of impact on the ambassadors' learning.⁸⁹ Although it would be tempting to explain this with ambassadors from Jordan and Egypt having a much stronger national team, and the Danes simultaneously being overrepresented in the survey, the survey shows no significant difference in the answers from ambassadors of different nationalities.

National teams

The national teams in Egypt and Jordan consist of both international and national ambassadors. Similarly to the international level, the learning environment on the national level consists of separate and intertwining *communities of practice*. In the two following sections the structure and learning spaces of the two national teams will be examined. This is primarily done from the perspective of and pertaining to the learning of the national ambassadors.

National Egyptian team

The entire Egyptian national team is made up of the 'old national team', recruited in 2012, and the 'new national team', who has been recruited continuously. The selection process uses the same type of interviews as on the international level. A large number of the national ambassadors are from the same university in Cairo, where they engage with each other in student unions and initiatives, and where a number of members have been recruited.

⁸⁷ 13 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 12 'some positive impact', 3 'little positive impact' and 2 'no impact'.

⁸⁸ 16 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 5 'some positive impact', 7 'little positive impact' and 1 'no impact' and 1 say 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁸⁹ 8 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact', 4 'little positive impact' and 3 'no impact', 1 'little negative impact' and 5 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

The national team in Egypt meets every three months to attend training, typically for two to three days during a weekend. These trainings are labelled Training of Trainers. After the first three days of training members of the national team can call themselves ambassador trainers, and are now ready to conduct workshops spreading the idea of dialogue nationally. Occasionally the national team will have longer trainings e.g. in 2013 when the national team travelled to Jordan for 5 days, to attend a joint training seminar with the Jordanian national team. International ambassadors from Egypt who are active in the national team often play a role as trainers in the regular national trainings, and they generally try to transfer their knowledge from the international seminars to the national ambassadors. This type of peer-to-peer education creates some connection between the two levels and allows national ambassadors to learn from the most skilled members of the community of practice. During the international training seminars, international ambassadors also facilitate workshops for the national team, which gives them a chance to meet non-Egyptian representatives from the international level of the programme. During the international seminar held in April 2015 a full day workshop for the new national Egyptian team was facilitated by an international team. One national ambassador who participated found that she *'got many ideas that we will implement in the workshops in the coming period'*. There are no external trainers as on the international level.

Trainings are centred on facilitation skills, team building, values of dialogue, how to plan a workshop according to objectives as well as general dialogue skills based on The Dialogue Handbook, which acts as the main reference book for the national team. Each training session has a theme according to the current need of the national team and ambassadors work consciously with self-evaluation, to know what they need to work on personally. As on the international level, the approach on the national level is that ambassadors need to develop themselves before they can start developing society. Mohamed, a national ambassador from Egypt, explains the rationale behind:

During the training we said that the key to dialogue is me. So if I started with myself that will help me a lot to listen to others, accept them and give them a chance to express their opinions. The second step is to see and experience the positive outcomes of using dialogue. If I see a person using dialogue that will encourage me to do the same, in that way there will be more practice and application of dialogue. The next step is to work with people who are open to the idea of dialogue, but who don't know anything about dialogue. If I started to talk with them, they will accept and help me, as they like me will come to taste the pleasure of using dialogue.

Mohamed, national ambassador in Egypt since 2013

Aside from the official trainings the national team in Egypt has recently begun to meet every two weeks for a dialogue circle, which can be considered a more informal type of training. Here there is no trainer present but the team together facilitate a dialogue among themselves and ambassadors take turns to prepare a topic over which the group will do dialogue. This could be the topic of racism; how they face racism in their lives, how they are exposed to racism and how they react to racist acts. In this way ambassadors speak about dialogue in various segments of their lives. The dialogue circle is a place to practice dialogue and try out the various methods ambassadors are taught in the official non-formal trainings. Abdallah, a new member of the national team, explains the importance of the dialogue circles:

The best thing I gained was the idea of practicing because we meet twice per month on Thursdays to set a topic to talk about. During these meetings, one of us is responsible for facilitating the talk and we get to practice dialogue. In that way it becomes not only knowledge about dialogue, but practical experience with dialogue, where it becomes behaviour. It was nice that one of us is the facilitator so we are practicing as facilitators or dialoguers. I see that that was an important thing and I hope to continue like that. ... (It) gives me a chance to dialogue with others and feel that they have the same principles and values that I have and that we all use them. So I can express my opinion without any fear, because I know that no one will make fun of me because we trust each other. That helps me to really experience the skill of dialogue and make it into a life style ... When I am able to leave my comfort zone, I will be better able to deal with people without much effort. I started to express my opinion without waiting for feedback from my others or fearing that they will make fun of my opinions. My main goal becomes to show others who I am and to discover and learn who the other person is.

Abdallah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

National Egyptian ambassadors, who have not participated in the international level, point out three important learning spaces: the official training, the informal dialogue circles, and the workshops. Ambassadors say that the three spaces develop different part of their learning.

The non-formal and informal sessions are where they are exposed to the dialogical values of the AFD programme, learn to listen and put themselves in other peoples' shoes. They learn facilitation and dialogue skills and learn to plan and conduct a workshop. The dialogue circles are particularly important since they create a trustful space where ambassadors can gain a feeling of a community of shared values and a belonging to the AFD programme. In many ways the training space resembles the trustful and personal space created on the international level. Several ambassadors call it a 'safe zone' and one ambassador describes it this way:

When we became closer, we started to work together as a team on how to strengthen the team spirit. We were talking about sensitive topics and our "red lines". The latter became the main topic of one of the sessions. I was very sensitive but I never feared that anyone would judge me. I felt safe because I was able to express my opinion even if it differs to that of the others. They will respect me and listen well to me, and they might even gain something from it. So I have come to consider it to be the place where I can put everything on the table, or unload, and express the things that I might otherwise keep to myself.

Hanan, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

Also the format of the national level, where ambassadors can be part of making decisions for the team, creates a learning space. An ambassador says that things were previously more top led, but recently the structure has been made 'much more participatory'. This, she says, makes ambassadors feel that they belong to the programme, because they can influence it. Similar to the above-described learning space of the international teamwork, the teamwork in the national team or in smaller workgroups creates a learning space, in which ambassadors learn to work with someone very different from themselves.

A learning space exclusive to the national ambassadors in both Egypt and Jordan is that which evolves from the work on creating partnerships. The national Egyptian team

participate in conferences and events and furthermore work on creating partnerships with other organisations, initiatives and even governmental institutions. Important partnerships are currently formed with e.g. the Ministry of Youth in Egypt and an organisation working to fight drug abuse. Partnerships create possibilities to expand the range of workshops to more youth in different areas of Egypt. An Egyptian ambassador describes how the work on creating partnerships has taught him how to present in a way, so the partner also feels that they benefit from the partnership – as a ‘win-win situation’.

The national team in Egypt is currently experiencing difficulties with bureaucracy and permissions, especially due to the foreign funding of the AFD. They are now considering the options of conveying the AFD message through videos and the social media.

The international ambassadors believe that the AFD experience for the national team members is very different from their own experience. The national ambassadors are all on different levels of knowledge due to a rolling recruitment, and the intercultural aspect is not a part of their training or involvement. According to the international ambassadors, the national ambassadors are very passionate about the programme, but may have other motivations for participating.

Some national ambassadors from Egypt do, however, feel that the intercultural aspect of the programme plays a role, primarily due to the national team in Jordan. The fact that one project is implemented in two countries with the same goal of spreading the culture of dialogue makes a difference, says a national ambassador. If we recall the primary characteristics of a community of practice, one is precisely a shared domain. Another ambassador says:

It makes a big difference to my learning that there are 3 different countries and national teams. The experience of it being three different countries, with different ways of doing things exposes me to a variety of experiences that gives me lot of "weight". It gives me "weight" in relation to experiences, dialog skills and tools, and the fact that I have been exposed to different cultures. It was a really good experience when we went to Jordan. It was training, but just the fact that we got exposed to different people and a different country, was valuable. In Jordan we learned that they do things different to us, they for example video record the workshops they do, and then they discuss the video, and they get feedback on the training they did. Although we did not go out and facilitate a workshop with the Jordanian team, we did at least see and get exposed to a different way of doing things, and a different way of thinking.

Hamid, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

The national ambassadors find the intercultural aspect beneficial, at it gives ambassadors a chance to share different approaches and issues in each society. Some also enjoy when international ambassadors returns from the seminars with new knowledge that can be transferred in a peer-to-peer manner. While some national ambassadors find the interaction sufficient, others find it limited and the impact limited. Some national ambassadors describe the relation to the international team as sensitive, even unfriendly, due to a sense of hierarchy related to the international vs. national work.

The relation to and interaction with the national coordinator is described very positively. The non-authoritarian approach and supportive attitude is mentioned in particular.

The amount of interaction between the international and national ambassadors has recently increased, and the international ambassadors have started taking more part in the national activities. Some national ambassadors would like to see this increase continue.

The interaction between the national teams and the international team including Danes has made little impression compared to the national Jordanian team. Some ambassadors would like this particular interaction to increase.



Ambassadors for Dialogue in Denmark

National Jordanian team

The Jordanian national team was formed in 2012 and has a rolling recruitment. Members of the national team have consciously been selected from all 12 governorates, 2 ambassadors per governorate, in order to spread the topic of dialogue to all areas of Jordan.

When ambassadors join the programme they are initially trained in dialogue and dialogue methods by the international ambassadors. Later, they receive an intensive Training of Trainers course. The course, which makes up one of the primary learning spaces for the national ambassadors, takes four months and is divided into three trainings of 3-4 days; 10-

11 days of training in total, including facilitation of workshops. During this training the ambassadors are firstly taught facilitation skills, how to stand in front of an audience, how to talk, and how to interact with the participants. Secondly, the international ambassadors share their experiences with the national teams, including success stories and advices for conducting workshops. Thirdly, the national ambassadors prepares for the workshops, how to 'deal with dialogue as a societal value' and how to communicate this to workshop participants.

In order to improve the ambassadors' facilitation skills the national team make use of video recordings. During the training course each ambassador will be recorded and the team will watch the video together followed by a discussion of methods. Ambassadors found this type of feedback very useful in terms of learning. They furthermore mention the iceberg and the talking stick as exercises that have taught them about the nature and methods of dialogue.

The interactivity of the training is in particular praised by the Jordanian ambassadors, who find it completely different to any of the other programmes that they have previously been trained in. It has greatly affected the way they see dialogue and dialogue training as well as the way they conduct training on dialogue. An ambassador says:

By the conclusion of the third and fourth dialogue training sessions we were gaining a deeper understanding to the extent that we felt able to convey information about dialogue to others. ... In the training I deliver, I try to convey to them an understanding of explorative dialogue, to enable them to independently explore the meaning of dialogue. ... I ask them to explore the information themselves and give them activities ... as opposed to spoon-feeding them information. How should I ask a person to implement dialogue having given him instructions without allowing him to practice the methodology of conducting dialogue with others?

Noor, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

Since the national ambassadors are spread over all areas of Jordan, they return to their hometowns after the training course and primarily facilitate workshops in their local governorates. On the basis of the sessions held locally, the ambassadors are evaluated and made part of the national team. Ambassadors mainly work on dialogue together with organisations that they are already active in or through community centres, which AFD partners up with. As in Egypt, the work on creating partnerships is described as a learning space for the ambassadors, in which they network, learn to negotiate and plan and design workshops in order to meet certain objectives.

National Jordanian ambassadors, who have not participated in the international level, point out three important learning spaces, closely resembling the three pointed out by the Egyptian team: the official training, the monthly meetings, and the workshops. In addition they also point out the 'relationships' they create to others in their local areas as important. They are in general very much concerned with placing AFD *in* society. As in the rest of the programme, the training and approach on the national level in Jordan focus on developing society through developing the ambassadors. Therefore the national ambassadors see the personal and collective learning as complimentary and they see a clear change in the group dynamic of the national team. Two ambassadors say:

Our programme is called the National Team for the Dissemination of the Culture of Dialogue; it first and foremost aims at our self-development. It truly is a national team, even the name, you are representing all the segments of society, all its factions, all its cultures, you as a team formed from all of Jordan, from north and south, from east and west, bearing all the cultures, so I guess that the principle objective of this project is: develop yourself so that you can transfer what you've learned.

Mona, national ambassador in Jordan since 2012

I feel that the programme through developing us develops the society. I mean that it develops the society through developing qualified individuals capable of conveying a message, so definitely in its first phases the programme will not be disseminated unless we who are conveying the message develop. We have to have a personal conviction of the message that we are supposed to convey. So in the first phase it is developing my personality, and by developing my personality, I am able to convey the culture that I've acquired from the programme. It reaches the society through individuals who had developed themselves.

Amir, national ambassador in Jordan since 2014

The Jordanian ambassadors try to implement dialogue sessions wherever possible, including their workplaces. They are, however, challenged by a culture in the civil society environment in Jordan, where it has become customary that workshop participants must be provided with coffee, lunch or even a per diem for participating in a dialogue workshop. While per diems are not offered, the budget does covers transport and snacks. Still logistics are a challenge since transport to and in remote areas can be difficult. Yet, ambassadors are generally highly motivated by spreading the idea about dialogue. An ambassador says:

When you throw a stone in the water it forms concentric rings – this is exactly what happens with dialogue. It is nice when you learn from a person, and then what you have learned will go to another governorate, and that it in that way spreads. And when it is moved there were practices with people that you've met in the learning space, even if we (as trainers) were not present, and they would talk and dialogue with each other. To me the most important learning space was to see how the idea and concept of dialogue was spreading and being relayed from one individual to the next, and then to more people; each person is an ambassador in his area and his surroundings.

Amir, national ambassador in Jordan since 2014

Often workshops will be related to the topic of 'communication skills', which has become the 'hot topic' in Jordan the past six years. As a Jordanian ambassador describe it, 'work in organisations in Jordan is like a fashion. This year all the organisations in Jordan are working on decentralization, last year it was holding debate.'

In 2012, before 'communication skills' started trending and when the national team was formed, many civil society organisations were giving training sessions on 'debating skills'. According to the national ambassadors, the objective of these was to teach participants how to win a debate. The very different focus of the dialogue workshops were, however, well received by both national ambassadors and participants, who liked the 'entirely new concept' and interactive training method.

There is a strong sense of friendship within the national team. Many ambassadors are part of the 'organisational scene' in Jordan, and have, besides their involvement in the AFD programme, been active in and received training from projects related to human rights,

youth, media, refugees etc. They know each other well due to the training that they have shared at the AFD, and when they meet in some of the other organisations, they find each other to be the '*closest person, the one that resembles me most*'. Ambassadors from different areas of Jordan in this way help each other as a network, also when it comes to facilitating.

As in Egypt, the international – or should we say regional - aspect plays a positive role in terms of learning for the Jordanian ambassadors too. The joint training with the Egyptian team is spoken positively about in terms of sharing methods and meeting others working for the same cause. The experience also gives the national ambassadors a taste of the challenges the international ambassadors experience in the diverse teams; Egyptian and Jordanian dialects can be a language barrier, an occasional conflict arises due to differences and must be solved via the talking stick. An ambassador describes the importance of sharing of ideas and techniques:

They presented using the method they use in Egypt, and we presented using the method we use in Jordan, both teams are conveying the same message, but they, with their way (they use) in Egypt, which suits their culture, and we with our way in Jordan, which suits our culture. They benefited from things we did, and we benefited from things that they did, which demonstrated the advantage of there being trust and friendship between Egypt and Jordan, the benefit of it was that we exchanged experiences with each other. We learned how Ola presents this message, and I can use it, and she finds out how I present it in Jordan, and she uses it once she returns to Egypt. It was really wonderful, when we got together, each Jordanian and Egyptian got together, to the extent that Mahmoud didn't place us in separate rooms in the hotel, he placed each Jordanian person with an Egyptian, so that we can find out how they work and they can find out how we work, and we could all work in the same way, so we go home with two ideas, instead of remaining with the Jordanian idea alone, and that of Egypt alone.

Amir, national ambassador in Jordan since 2014

The social media play a role in keeping the ambassadors in touch both within and beyond the country. Ambassadors describe their own Facebook page as a learning space, where they have conversations about dialogue, and the Jordanian and Egyptian national teams remain in contact via the social media. Hussein, a Jordanian ambassador, post photos of activities that they are doing and in this way create a sense of working on the same project, which is highly motivating:

Whenever I meet anyone, I ask for their Facebook (account), I also did that with the ambassadors who were with us from Egypt. I still follow their news on Instagram and Facebook, but as I told you I'm not good at direct communications, but I always see their activities and remember that we have another group in Egypt and they're working on the something. We'd spent four or five days together. I work hard and upload photos of our work, so that they can see that we are working as well, it motivates me. The things they did, their method of presentation and the exercises they carried out in the exchange workshop, I always try to adapt the things that would be suitable here in Jordan, there are certain exercises that are absolutely not suited, because for example the environment in Egypt is quite liberal while my area it is very conservative. I however always try to add our touch to the exercises so that they are suitable for the actual conditions. The exchange of experiences is one of the things that have been unforgettable. I was hoping that everyone could get the opportunity, so that they could learn from the experience we were exposed to.

Hussein, national ambassador in Jordan since 2012

Every month, and following every international training in particular, the national team meets at the WE Centre to learn from the international ambassadors. The national coordinator attends these meetings, which for many make up the primary contact to the management. Facebook makes up another contact point. The relation to and interaction with the national coordinator is described very positively, and the ambassadors feel that the programme is 'close to his heart'. Because ambassadors are spread all over Jordan, the team experience some challenges of meeting due to transport time, and the national coordinator occasionally visit the ambassadors in their local areas. Some ambassadors have been forced to quit the programme due to lack of time for transport. The national ambassadors find the monthly meetings and the transferring of knowledge from international to national level important for their learning. They are motivated to continue the work and learn new things that can be applied in the workshops they facilitate; they learn new exercises, such as the 'Listen, Talk, Ask Only' exercise that they can apply in their workshops straight away and see the impact off. Ambassadors would like increase the contact to the international team and focus more on new tools that can be transferred to the governorates. Some ambassadors would also like to be engaged on the international level, since they feel that it is more advanced.

The contact with international ambassadors from other countries than Jordan is very limited, but some ambassadors have had the experience, and describe it positively in terms of learning:

I have come into contact with the International Ambassadors from Jordan and from Denmark as well. ... I had not met foreigners before – they are remote from me culturally, socially, environmentally and in every other respect. The society I grew up in is rather enclosed: the same family and the same social group with similar outlooks and modes of interaction. So when you come into contact with people who are rather different to you – I wish to add one thing here and that is how one should respect people who are different to you – they may think in a different way but ultimately there are lots of good things in common. I did not know that the way of thinking, the manners, the interactions are all common, the differences do not matter. There are differences in beliefs, and each person is free in their beliefs or in styles of dress but these are all personal issues and do not matter. There are lots of values in common such as honesty, justice, cooperation, hope, love, consideration and a smiling countenance, I liked all these things.

Youssef, national ambassador from Jordan since 2013



Workshop conducted in Egypt by an international team

Facilitating workshops nationally

The national workshops are in Jordan and Egypt facilitated by members of the national team, consisting of both international and national ambassadors. In Denmark the international ambassadors conduct national workshops, as the national level does not work independently. Workshops in Denmark are primarily conducted for internationally active volunteers of DUF's member organisations, but are also incorporated into other DUF activities. In Jordan and Egypt the workshops are diverse and are conducted for university students, organisations, school pupils, women groups etc.

For international ambassadors from all three countries the national workshops facilitated in between the training seminars⁹⁰ as well as after the phase(s)⁹¹ generally have a positive impact on their personal learning. Here there is some correlation between those who find it to have had a very positive or some positive impact, and those who have facilitated a large amount of workshops (10-15 and 15 and more). National ambassadors also describe the workshops as one of the most important learning spaces and as a driving force, which motivates them to continue in the programme.

In Egypt, the country coordinator is in most cases responsible for the logistics and planning of workshops, while ambassadors are facilitating them. Ambassadors are either asked personally or collectively via their Facebook-page to facilitate. In a few cases, ambassadors take initiative to do their own workshop at e.g. their university or another organisation they are working with. In this case the national coordinator provides them with the materials needed while ambassadors take care of everything else. National workshops are facilitated on a voluntary basis and ambassadors will facilitate when they have the time and interest. The international ambassadors are, according to the national ambassadors, less involved in the national facilitation. International ambassadors who have been involved internationally most recently typically facilitate more workshops than ambassadors from the early phases.

National ambassadors describe the learning that they gain from the workshops very similar to the international ambassadors. They are learning from the reactions they are met with, the experiences of success when 'it works' and they create dialogue among the participants, the planning that works or fails and the teamwork that they get to try out in practice. A national Egyptian ambassador says:

The workshops that we give are excellent learning spaces that enable us to evaluate ourselves and gain insight into our reactions. They also teach us more about facilitation. It develops our facilitation skills and enables us to know our weaknesses and strengths. We also learn what things make us nervous during our work and the things that we are good at. They are also very good learning spaces for learning teamwork because we work as a team and set plans and sessions. The planning during the workshop is a real life experiment and experience of how to work with a team. We learned to help and support others so it is the greatest learning space.

Rania, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

⁹⁰ 14 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 8 'some positive impact', 3 'little positive impact', 2 'no impact', 1 'little negative impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁹¹ 15 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 4 'some positive impact', 4 'little positive impact', 4 'no impact' and 3 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

The national ambassadors learn from the different points of view that they encounter during workshops, especially when ambassadors facilitate outside of their own geographical area – e.g. outside of Cairo. Hence, as is the case with the intercultural workshops, the learning experience goes both ways and benefits both the workshop participants as well as the ambassadors. Two national ambassadors says:

When we deliver training sessions, we also definitely learn from the participants. We gain new information from them, or new questions that we must obtain in the beginning. I take these questions and search for their answers, so this is definitely something I learn from, and is added to me.

Noor, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

If I am in a workshop and I know that I have certain shortcomings I might actually learn something pertaining to the culture of dialogue from the participants who don't actually know anything about dialogue and add that thing to my activities. Regarding this issue; we were in a workshop during the political disputes in Egypt - this period was characterized by the notion that if anyone has a point of view that is different to yours that person is considered your enemy, and people were against each other and easily getting into political fights. During one of the activities, - and as a result of bad judgment on our part, there was a political question in one of the games. This used to happen before without creating a problem, but all of a sudden a racist argument erupted. In the midst of all that there was a participant being all quiet and looking at the others. We were doing the game where there is a line, and the participants have to stand on the line near to the side of the idea that they support. That participant was standing in the middle and he didn't know where to go. Then he asked a question that ended the conflict "who could claim that what is right is absolutely right and what is wrong is absolutely wrong". This question made the others stop their arguing because in reality right and wrong are relative concepts. This participant hadn't joined in dialog workshops before but his question made the other participants rethink what they were doing. They all said that their supporting one side in a political conflict doesn't necessarily have to mean being against the other side. I hadn't focused on this before but it turned out that I can learn from a workshop participant even those who don't necessarily have the knowledge but from the experiences.

Sarah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

While the majority of the international survey respondents say that the focus on facilitating national workshops is sufficient⁹², the national ambassadors, to whom they are a primary learning space, would like to see more and longer national workshops.

In addition to the national activities some international ambassadors engage in regional activities – a recent initiative, which to the majority of the participants involved has had a very positive impact on their learning.⁹³

⁹² 12 would like the focus to increase, while 16 would like it to stay the same. 2 would like the focus to decrease.

⁹³ 10 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 2 'some positive impact', 4 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact' and 13 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

Individual reflection

Learning happens in between the moments. I've learned most from the workshops I've conducted years ago. And all of a sudden I go "oh" – and that's where the learning happens.

Tanja, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 2

Many ambassadors describe how much of their learning happens in hindsight, as things are put in context. Reflection is a large part of this and plays a major role in ambassadors' learning process. All 30 survey respondents say that their own reflections in between the seminars⁹⁴ as well as after completing the phase(s)⁹⁵ have had a positive impact on their learning. A Jordanian ambassador says; *"You need two months to process what happened – okay, what did we do? Why this happened? What was good?"* In fact, the number of respondents who find that reflection had a very positive impact on their learning increases with time. This indicates that what ambassadors learn through the programme is gradually being incorporated. Furthermore, none of the survey respondents say that reflection on their own has not been a part of their AFD experience, also indicating that inner reflection happens no matter how involved the ambassadors are in the national work.

Two ambassadors describe their individual reflections and reactions post-training seminar:

I think the most important is the seminars. But I don't think I always realize how much I actually learn within the seminars, and it's more like, then you go out to a workshop and you figure out like wow this is where I experience some of it in practice, but there's like some simple learning points where, because the seminars are so intense and there's happening so much and everybody is being so honest, and it's like, yea it's very intense. And some of the learning points I guess I don't really understand it in depth until I a few weeks after the seminars stand in a situation with a friend or a family member or whatever, and then I'm like, "ah, this is where it can be useful for this and that". I think the reflection afterwards is like, is also, or mainly it's sort of just a strength in the learning process in the seminars that you realize what it was really about.

Kristine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3

It's been very intense in between the sessions ... I've met a lot of Danish ambassadors and I've also talked to some of the ambassadors in Egypt and Jordan because I think that, at least for me, I got home with a lot of impressions and then I had to handle those afterwards. I would have more questions and then I talked to people about that. So I think it has a great impact also in between (the seminars) and the transfer to ... everyday life has also been peculiar. Just that I actively think and try to listen to the end of the sentence before I argue against it or something like that, very concrete stuff. What question can you ask now? I've been asking a lot more like "how does that make you feel"-questions afterwards, and it's given more genuine conversations than before.

Walid, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

As the things learned are placed into the ambassadors' own lives, they suddenly fall into place. In this way time works in the favour of the learning process of the international ambassadors. The ambassadors reflect over training sessions and informal social situations,

⁹⁴ 14 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact' and 7 'little positive impact'.

⁹⁵ 16 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 10 'some positive impact' and 4 'little positive impact'.

but workshops conducted internationally and nationally. The international Danish ambassador Tanja says:

I process things by talking about them with everybody I know. So I've been processing all of it. I've been reflecting on it. But one example, I had a workshop someplace in Hellerup, and we had a break, and after the break 50+ percent of the participants had left, because it wasn't really them. And besides that, half of the 50 that left, were just sitting like this (arms crossed). And it was the worst experience ever, because they hated everything about us so much that they'd rather skip class than being there, even though the teacher came to take attendance. They'd rather skip that than stay with us for another hour. And I think about half a year ago, I realised that, the exact moment of me being part of AFD that's the exact moment I've learned the most.

Interviewer: what did you learn?

I don't know. Everything – how to handle the situation, how to handle myself, how to understand... how we learn more, and how to say "what is your problem", "why are you sitting with your arms crossed in front of you", just to be straightforward. Everything. And it hit me more than two years after. And I think that most of what I've learned, I've learned after. Sometimes just the day after, sometimes three weeks after, sometimes even longer.

The various social settings back at the ambassadors' homes, their sharing of stories with people, and their incorporation of dialogue in life can lead to reflections. These reflections may feel as a clarification, while they at other times may feel complicating, as they give ambassadors a clearer understanding of their own learning process. Ambassadors may now know where they want to be, but are not there yet. An example comes from the Jordanian ambassador Karim, who is struggling with accepting the fact that there are things he cannot accept. Through the programme and his own reflections he has reached his goal and come to accept Danes and Danish culture, as well as both Shia and Sunni Muslims. But he has also become aware that he cannot currently accept homosexuality. He describes that he has started to incorporate dialogue in his life but believes that he 'still need much work', since he is not yet where he would like to be. He describes a gap between his goals and his current state, which is 'a grey area' that creates dialogue in his mind. He finds the area of things 'in between' frustrating, because he does not know how to deal with it and it affects his life. Several ambassadors describe that they like Karim have reached a point in their level of reflection, where they now know what they cannot accept and who they are willing and unwilling to attempt dialogue with.

The majority of survey respondents find the focus of reflection in the AFD programme sufficient.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ 12 would like to increase the focus, while 17 would like it to stay the same. 1 would like the focus to decrease.



Workshop conducted in Egypt by an international team



Workshop participants doing an exercise about dialogue vs. discussion

CHAPTER 7

7 EMPLOYING DIALOGUE IN PRACTICE

It's not just something you can use in the workshop, but also you can use it in your daily life when you have these discussions on Facebook or in real life or whatever. But I really think about okay "what am I saying now and what is the other person saying" in order to understand what is the, like, the core here, what are we talking about and how can we, how can we reach some kind of agreement or disagreement instead of like yelling at each other and get in a fight about it. I get so, I think I can use the skills in my daily life also and not just at the workshops or with Egyptians or Jordanians, but with everyone.

Mads, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

The impact study clearly shows that ambassadors feel able to use the content taught in the AFD programme in practice *within* the framework of the programme itself – i.e. when facilitating workshops internationally and nationally.⁹⁷ This chapter focuses on how the Ambassadors for Dialogue collectively use what they have learned and gained by being part of the AFD programme *outside* of the programme. It looks into how ambassadors employ what they have learned in practice in their daily life, which here is divided into the personal, professional and organisational spheres. However, the interaction with the surrounding world is a learning space for ambassadors' informal learning outside of the AFD framework, too.

Rather than give a comprehensive mapping of programme related activities or all the various ways in which ambassadors use dialogue, this chapter provides an overview with examples of what ambassadors have done and accomplished with what they learned and gained from the AFD in their personal, professional and organisational lives. Furthermore, it sums up some of the significant changes it has led to in the ambassadors' lives.

7.1 Using Dialogue in Personal Life

I think I would say I have gotten to feel what dialogue is, more than just know what it is. ... When we're in those seminars where we spend two weeks together, then it's all really nice, with its conflict and with its ups and downs, it's really, really nice. And you think this is listening and understanding and trust, and so on. But it's been when I go back to real life. When I take it back to my role with my friends and my family that is where I actually realise what it is to listen.

Yasmine, international ambassador and volunteer trainer from Jordan

As we turn away from the official framework of the AFD programme and begin to look at the ambassadors' daily life and the ambassadors' use of dialogue in the personal, professional or organisational spheres, it is important to note that these three spheres are not merely places in which dialogue is put to use. They equally serve as majorly important learning spaces, in which informal learning takes place. In these three spheres, ambassadors apply their dialogical skills and attitudes and in return receive real life reactions from which they learn.

⁹⁷ In the survey all 30 respondents are currently or have previously used methods, techniques and understandings learned and gained as part of AFD when facilitating international and national workshops.

To engaging with family⁹⁸ and friends⁹⁹ in-between seminars as well as after completing the international phase(s) is to all international survey respondents a part of their learning experience. Many experience it to have had some positive impact.

As Yasmine says, it is when the skills and understandings learned and gained through the AFD programme are *used* back in 'real life' that she really learns. Both international and national ambassadors from all three countries express that they use dialogue to a high degree in their personal life. 29 out of the 30 international survey respondents say that being part of the AFD programme has been valuable to them on a personal level¹⁰⁰ and 24 state that they currently use methods, techniques and understandings learned and gained as part of AFD in their personal life with family and friends. Another 3 have previously used it.¹⁰¹

Some of those who find dialogue hard to use in their personal life explain that they find dialogue harder to use with people they already know. They find it context specific and not appropriate to use in the family - especially when it has to do with politics and religion. Some Arab ambassadors explain that they may try to apply a dialogical attitude, but the cultural family patterns are making it less effective. Some also say that a reason for not using it is that they expect their families to react negative towards it. Yet, ambassadors have in general had positive – if any - reactions from their surroundings.

Some of the Arab ambassadors' families have noticed a change, and one has even been encouraged by his family to continue his participation. Others' families now ask their sons and daughters to mediate conflicts between siblings. An Egyptian ambassador's study mates have noticed changes in her confidence when speaking and her ability to take criticism. As a result they have shown interest in joining AFD too. Also, an international Jordanian ambassador says that people take notice, because she has changed her behaviour in conflicts, and now instead of shutting off, she tries to understand the person's opinion.

Ambassadors use dialogue in their personal life in the overall communication with friends, family and study mates both in real life and online. They use it when they establish their own families and when they bring up their children. As Zeinab, a national ambassador in Jordan says; *I now use it with my children, my youngest daughter tells me "Mother, let us talk first, I want to talk." ... Now the small clashes and upsetting situations have stopped.* In Egypt the situation and the community has changed since the revolution, and to have dialogue and express different opinions is increasingly difficult. The Egyptian ambassadors therefore also use dialogue skills to handle the recent changes. In addition, some ambassadors also use their dialogical knowledge to look back in time, and understand things that have happened previously.

⁹⁸ In-between the seminars: 4 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 11 'some positive impact', 6 'little positive impact', 5 'no impact', 1 'little negative impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'. After completing the phase(s): 7 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 12 'some positive impact', 6 'little positive impact', 2 'no impact', 1 'little negative impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

⁹⁹ In-between the seminars: 5 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 14 'some positive impact', 6 'little positive impact', 3 'no impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'. After completing the phase(s): 6 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 16 'some positive impact', 6 'little positive impact' and 2 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

¹⁰⁰ 23 respondents 'completely agree', 6 'somewhat agree' and 1 'neither disagree nor agree'.

¹⁰¹ 24 respondents are currently using it, 3 have previously used it, 3 have not been able to use it.

Although ambassadors find dialogue exercises, such as the talking stick, incredibly successful in their own learning, they are not always easy to use in life outside the AFD framework. In both personal, professional and organisational life, ambassadors' experiences with using dialogue exercises and games are rather mixed. 21 of the 27 respondents, who use dialogue methods in their personal life, do use dialogue exercises – approximately half of them find it easy and half of them difficult.¹⁰² 14 of them find it either very or somewhat successful.¹⁰³

An example of an ambassador, who uses dialogue exercises in their personal life, is Karim, a Jordanian ambassador from phase 4, who brain switches with his fiancé. They are so different from one another, and she sometimes finds things he does unacceptable, so he asks her to brain switch. He says: *"I will put myself in your shoes, but please do the same. And sometimes it works, but sometimes it turns into a disaster."*

Another example is Mohab, an international ambassador from Egypt, who mostly does 'unnoticeable' dialogue activities with his family. He has however once used the talking stick with his father in a heated political discussion during the revolution. It gave them the space to listen to each other, and they each accepted each other's different opinions.

A less noticeable exercise used by ambassadors in daily life is mirroring, which in a modified version can be used to rephrase a point of view to assure that it has been understood. A Jordanian ambassador believes that this is particularly useful when speaking Arabic, since many words may be misunderstood.

There are also examples of dialogue exercises that have been modified to fit the ambassadors' everyday life, and in the same way can the principles of an exercise be transferred. Mohamed, a national ambassador from Egypt, has applied an exercise that he calls 'Diversity in and out' in real life:

All the participants close their eyes and we put a sticker with the same colours on their backs and only one of them gets a sticker with a different colour. Then we ask them to divide into groups according to colours. All of them move into one group pushing away the participant with the different colour. All of them are rejecting that person. Then when that happens, we start reflecting on what that person must be feeling. When I joined the Training of Facilitators and took part in that activity I felt I understood what it must feel like to be that rejected person. When I started to facilitate that activity in the workshops I knew how the person would feel, and the person himself would reflect on his feelings and tell them to the others. I started to apply that in society and find the rejected person and go sit with that person and offer my support because I know the feeling. Being rejected can lead to suppression, being isolated or becoming an extremist. Extremism starts with rejection and being discarding.

Mohamed, national ambassador from Egypt since 2013

By internalising the exercise Mohamed is hence making the message that it conveys part of his behaviour. This supports the result, which shows that compared to dialogue exercises, the

¹⁰² 4 respondents find it 'very difficult', 3 'somewhat difficult', 6 'neither/nor', 5 'somewhat easy' 3 'very easy' and 6 are 'not using it'.

¹⁰³ 6 respondents find it 'very successful', 8 'somewhat successful', 6 'neither/nor', 1 'somewhat unsuccessful' and 6 are 'not using it'.

internalised methods such as reflections – e.g. inner dialogue - and a dialogical attitude are much easier to use for ambassadors¹⁰⁴ and the use is found to be overwhelmingly successful.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, all respondents who state that they use dialogue in their personal, professional or organisational life are using these internalised skills. Both are generally easily used. The more internalised of the two, reflections, is overall found a bit easier to use than a dialogical attitude, which involves interaction. But as an international Jordanian ambassador says, the inner dialogue is something that takes time to learn, and not something that can easily be used *with* other people.

Firstly, an example of how inner dialogue is used comes from Tarek, a Danish ambassador:

I think something I neglected before is the inner dialogue which I actually think is where I use it the most. Like the inner dialogue of actually being aware of why am I like this and how can I fix this and what's great about me. ... I guess, it's not really having a dialogue with yourself, but it's seeing the deeper understanding. ... I like, sometimes it's easier to just say this guy is an idiot and I don't want to deal with him, but really he's not just an idiot. You just see the side that he's presenting currently, but you don't see the whole package that he's carrying of life experience, of cultural experience, identity and everything that he has experienced in life that makes him the person he is. The inner dialogue is really just a more getting into the debts of yourself in a way ... "what makes me me, and why does it make me me, and do I want to, what do I want to improve and how can I improve" and really just being honest about yourself and your short comings, both in social interactions but also in general regarding everything. And it's something that I really weren't aware of that much in the beginning or at least before, "I'm just me and that's what I am", but I didn't really consider the levels within me.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

Secondly, the use of a dialogical attitude makes up the largest part of examples of how dialogue is used, which are found in this impact study. The dialogical attitude is used with families – something that primarily the Arab ambassadors speak about as challenging. Especially the national ambassadors see an eye opening change when they do use it. Abdallah tells that he finds it hard to use dialogue with people close to you, because '*with them you don't think much about your behaviour – you just act naturally*'. The Egyptian ambassador continues:

So if dialogue is not a skill that is inherent in your nature you don't use. When you start to use dialogue consciously, you have to make sure that it becomes your natural behaviour because we don't concentrate at home and deal naturally. If you are hungry you say I am hungry and if you are thirsty you say I am thirsty and if you are angry you say I am angry. When I started to apply use dialogue consciously I was very happy, it was a bit late but I really felt the difference it made. In the beginning when I used to ask for something, I would only think about what I wanted. I wasn't concerned with understanding the situation at home or why they will be unable to get me what I wanted. Now I have started to listen more carefully to why they couldn't get me what I wanted. I

¹⁰⁴ 13 respondents find reflections 'very easy', 7 'somewhat easy', 4 'neither/nor', 2 'somewhat difficult' and 1 'very difficult'. 8 respondents find a dialogical attitude 'very easy', 13 'somewhat easy', 1 'neither/nor', 4 'somewhat difficult' and 1 'very difficult'.

¹⁰⁵ 13 respondents find reflections 'very successful', 11 'somewhat successful', 2 'neither/nor' and 1 'somewhat unsuccessful'. 14 respondents find a dialogical attitude 'very successful', 10 'somewhat successful' and 3 'neither/nor'.

have started to prioritise the things I want. When you start applying the principles that you have learned with your family, life becomes easier. I used to argue about things like the remote control of the TV. I am avoiding these silly things now because the principles of dialogue have become an integrated part of my behaviours it not only a matter of knowledge, it has become part of my nature now.

Abdallah, national ambassador in Egypt since 2014

The dialogical attitude is not only useful in the close-knit family setting but also at university, which is a setting where youth from various backgrounds are mixed. International Jordanian ambassadors find it useful to have the AFD experience of engaging with people from different cultures and use the dialogical skills learned to communicate with students who are very different from themselves. Both international and national ambassadors employ dialogue on three levels in the university setting: with study mates in e.g. group work, in student initiatives and occasionally with the university employees. A national ambassador says:

Because we do many things in our lives, sometimes a light bulb is turned on, when you realize that you have used a method or tool or something that is dialogical. You start having an internal dialog, where you continue to ask yourself: "what just happened there? I actually just managed to use one of the tools." It makes you aware that you can turn what you have learned into actual behaviour and your way of being. This kind of situation has happened with me in the student unions. I was heading a student union and I used what I had learned with some people in the student union, with other people I wasn't really able to use it, until later on when I had developed further.

Omar, national ambassador in Egypt since 2012

Other national ambassadors have also used dialogue in student unions and 'societies' where they have introduced other student to the idea of dialogue, particularly in relation to decision-making and conflict resolution. Another national ambassador from Egypt describes that they have many problems in the universities and hence sitting together and listening to each other while allowing each other to express opinions, suggest solutions and discuss the most suitable solution to a problem is important. In this way dialogue is used to ensure participatory decision-making.

All 27 survey respondents who use dialogue in their personal life also use conflict resolution techniques. 19 find it very or somewhat easy and 25 find it very or somewhat successful.¹⁰⁶ The type of conflict resolution that is described by Danish ambassador Tarek, builds on the dialogical attitude:

A lot of the theory learning and practical learning takes place within the project, but I think it really sinks in when I get out of seminars ... When we're not in Egypt or Jordan or some place in Denmark, but when I get my ordinary life I think the learning really sinks in. ... And it's not something I think about that much in my own private life, but I kind of feel that during my interactions I really listen more intentional and am trying to resolve, not necessarily resolve a conflict, but prevent conflict with my immediate others whom I speak with on a daily basis.

¹⁰⁶ 9 respondents find it 'very easy', 10 'somewhat easy', 3 'neither/nor', 3 'somewhat difficult' and 5 'somewhat difficult'. 12 respondents find it 'very successful', 13 'somewhat successful' and 2 'neither/nor'.

Tarek, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3 and 4

24 out of the 27 ambassadors use facilitation skills in their personal life – 20 of these find it very or somewhat easy and 23 very or somewhat successful.¹⁰⁷ An example of how facilitations skills have both been used and been the source of personal development and accomplishment comes from the Jordanian ambassador Mohammad:

The three years (in the AFD), it was a big job for me as a person. Yeah, it was the first time I stood in front of people and after that I was encouraged to do the things I always wanted to do. I started to give motivational speeches in university, so I am not afraid of standing in front of a thousand people. It was a really big thing for me. I really liked it, it helped me ... (to) like, personal development and it gave me self-confidence. How to stand in front of people, how to be dialogical. It affected my family, my friends, my everything in life, so as a person and ambassador I think I can really see it in my personality.

Mohammad, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 3 and 4



Ambassadors at a workshop conducted in Egypt

¹⁰⁷ 15 respondents find it 'very easy', 5 'somewhat easy', 1 'neither/nor', 3 'somewhat difficult' and 3 are 'not using it'. 14 respondents find it 'very successful', 9 'somewhat successful', 2 'neither/nor' and 2 are 'not using it'.

7.2 Using Dialogue in Professional Life

Ambassadors who did engage in a workplace with colleagues¹⁰⁸ and in studies with study mates¹⁰⁹ in between the seminars and after the phase(s) describe both as having some positive impact on their learning. 28 out of 30 ambassadors responding to the survey say that being part of the AFD programme has been valuable to them on a professional level.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, 23 out of 30 currently use methods, techniques and understandings learned and gained as part of AFD in their professional life at work. Only half of the 23 are currently working primarily, while the rest are students. This may indicate a broader understanding of 'professional life'. 5 additional ambassadors have previously used it at work, but four out of these 5 are now students. Only one respondent is working but not currently using it.¹¹¹

The vast majority of ambassadors use dialogue in their jobs, and there are many examples of different ways it is being used. Some have used their experience with the AFD as a qualification to open up doors e.g. in a job interviews. Others have used a dialogical attitude to influence their work in politics. Others again are using the intercultural abilities gained through the programme to work for international corporations or particularly draw on knowledge about the other participating countries. E.g. a Jordanian ambassador who works with Egyptian clients and benefits greatly from knowing the Egyptian mentality, as he designs workshops and trainings in this context.

However, some ambassadors - particularly from the Middle East and from the latest phase - find it difficult to use dialogue in their jobs, because they do not find dialogue suitable for the kind of business they are in or for dealing with e.g. their boss. Some say they can only use it to a certain degree and only up to the point that it benefits themselves as employees. E.g. they do not see honesty being useful in all situations. Others have not seen a need to use it.

Ambassadors working in sales find dialogue especially challenging to use. A national ambassador does however feel that she has been able to overcome the challenge – and with a result that actually pays off:

I now have my own company within the field of sales, and I tell my employees what to do to be good salesman. I sometimes feel that I have opposing directions within me, I am very convinced by dialog, but I would never be dialogical with one of my customers. My partner in the company would say to me, you say one thing, but do another thing. He would make fun at me, and say "oh yes, you

¹⁰⁸ In between the seminars: 5 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 11 'some positive impact', 4 'little positive impact', 5 'no impact' and 5 says 'not part of my AFD experience'. After the phase(s): 6 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 10 'some positive impact', 8 'little positive impact', 3 'no impact' and 3 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

¹⁰⁹ In between the seminars: 2 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact', 3 'little positive impact', 6 'no impact' and 10 says 'not part of my AFD experience'. After the phase(s): 5 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 9 'some positive impact', 5 'little positive impact', 3 'no impact' and 8 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

¹¹⁰ 18 respondents 'completely agree', 10 'somewhat agree', 1 'neither disagree nor agree' and 1 'somewhat disagree'.

¹¹¹ 23 respondents are currently using it, 5 have previously used it, and 2 have not been able to use it. One of the two not using it is not working, while the other is. Out of the five who have previously used it, four are not currently working but studying. Out of the 23 who are currently using it 12 are currently working while 11 are studying.

are really an ambassador for dialog", this issue was really something I struggled with. So I started to think about it, to find a way to deal with it, and decided that I would try to start by listening to the customer, and then explain things to him in a somewhat dialogical way, and to move a bit away from just being concerned with convincing the customer. I tried to do that a little, but only a little (laughter), but it did actually work, and I managed to sell even more, so it actually worked. This was really a very important learning situation that I adjusted myself to it.

Fatma, national ambassador from Egypt since 2013

Because almost every job involves working and engaging with other people, ambassadors make use of the listening and communication skills they have gained as part of the AFD, in order to understand and create understanding between both their costumers, clients, co-workers or boss. Another example comes from a Danish ambassador:

I think I pretty much use it in everything, because it sort of became something that you just do. ... But I think I use it the most in my work. ... I work at a student advisor service at University where we have like a completely flat structure. We are like five people working on equal terms and deciding almost everything ourselves. So I think it... what do you say, it takes a certain degree of dialogue to make that work in the relation, and to give space or everyone would need to run. ... I think I'm using it mainly unconsciously, but when something gets tough and things get difficult and somebody might be saying something that I completely disagree on, then ... I think it gets, my using of dialogue gets more conscious because it gets more difficult.

Kristine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 3

While most of the use might be done unconsciously, 25 out of the 28 respondents, who are currently or have previously used dialogue methods in their professional life, are consciously using dialogue exercises. However, as it is the case in ambassadors' personal life, the dialogue exercises are not always easy to use in professional life.¹¹² 14 of them find it either very or somewhat successful.¹¹³

The corner game is one of the dialogue exercises that are most commonly used by international ambassadors in various jobs, most often in situations related to education or presentation. Sofia, an international Egyptian ambassador from the pilot phase and phase 2 now works at the university where she, aside from applying a dialogical approach, has used dialogue exercises together with her students. The topic was political and she used the corner game with great successful. The students were open, engaged and surprised to find that they had so many different opinions. The ambassador herself was surprised about her own assumptions about some of the students. Like other ambassadors have experienced the use of the corner game, the students reacted very positively, after the initial confusion about this alternative way of teaching. The students encouraged Sofia to use it more, and she plans to incorporate it more into next year's teaching. In contrast, she does not use dialogue with

¹¹² 9 respondents find it 'very easy', 2 'somewhat easy', 7 'neither/nor', 3 'somewhat difficult', 4 'very difficult' and 3 are not using it.

¹¹³ 8 respondents find it 'very successful', 6 'somewhat successful', 6 'neither/nor', 1 'somewhat unsuccessful', 3 'very unsuccessful' and 4 are 'not using it'.

her colleagues at the faculty. Noor, a national ambassador in Jordan also describes how she has used dialogical methods to teach children:

I was teaching in a school where there was a huge chasm between the student and the teacher. It was a repressive approach that did not comply with any of the principles of dialogue. It relied on cramming and did not comply with the principles of facilitation and the activities in which you deliver the information in an accessible play-based manner, which helps the student to learn. In truth I have tried as far as possible to use my own initiatives in my lessons: how to manage and listen to the students and reduce side-discussions, how to use the play-based approach to convey the information. ... My method was new but I was not able to transform the school during one month. Even the teachers and management thought that my approach was not going to work. I used to derive the play-based activities from the lesson in order to teach them and convey the knowledge to them, but I discovered later that the pupils were saying that Ms Noor “was giving us games in the lessons and does not teach us”. The pupils loved the lessons but management was questioning me about giving them play-based activities in the lesson.

Noor, national ambassador in Jordan since 2013

As Noor describes, the visibility of the dialogue exercises may make them difficult due to the surrounding society's perception. The internalised methods, reflections and a dialogical attitude, are again easier and very successful to use, however not quite as easy or successful as in personal life.¹¹⁴ The vast majority do, however, find it very or somewhat successful¹¹⁵ and there are many examples of how a dialogical attitude is being used – a handful of them come from doctors. A Jordanian ambassador, who describes himself as previously being quite bossy, explains how he has been able to use his new calmness and listening skills in his job as a doctor:

I wasn't so dictator in my company, like in my work ... But I was so centred, like “I need to do this and this and this and others have to do this”, but now we have like dialogue meetings. “What do you think about how we can do this project, how can we apply this.”

Karim, International Ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

Besides using dialogue with colleagues, Karim uses dialogue with his patients: he gives them space to say what they want, gives himself space to explain their diseases, talks about their experiences, a forthcoming surgery etc. Another international ambassador, who now work as a doctor echoes this:

You get the mind-set ... and then it transforms very easily to my job... when I have to talk with people about very intimate stuff, and you really want to understand why they're here to see the doctor and what is their fear and how, like that whole doctor-patient interaction. I started approaching it with some dialogue tools and it gave me a greater satisfaction at least in understanding my patients. Usually we're not taught ... to be a patient doctor but when you dig in and ask about the fear and why did you come here, because you have acne or something, what are you afraid of and it's because of cancer, and then it turns out that the whole family has cancer, all

¹¹⁴ 15 find a dialogical attitude 'very easy', 8 'somewhat easy', 3 'neither/nor', 1 'somewhat difficult' and 1 'very difficult' while 13 find reflections 'very easy', 8 'somewhat easy', 5 'neither/nor' and 2 'somewhat difficult'.

¹¹⁵ 15 find a dialogical attitude 'very successful', 9 'somewhat successful', 2 'neither/nor' and 2 'somewhat unsuccessful'. 14 find reflections 'very successful', 8 'somewhat successful' and 6 'neither/nor'.

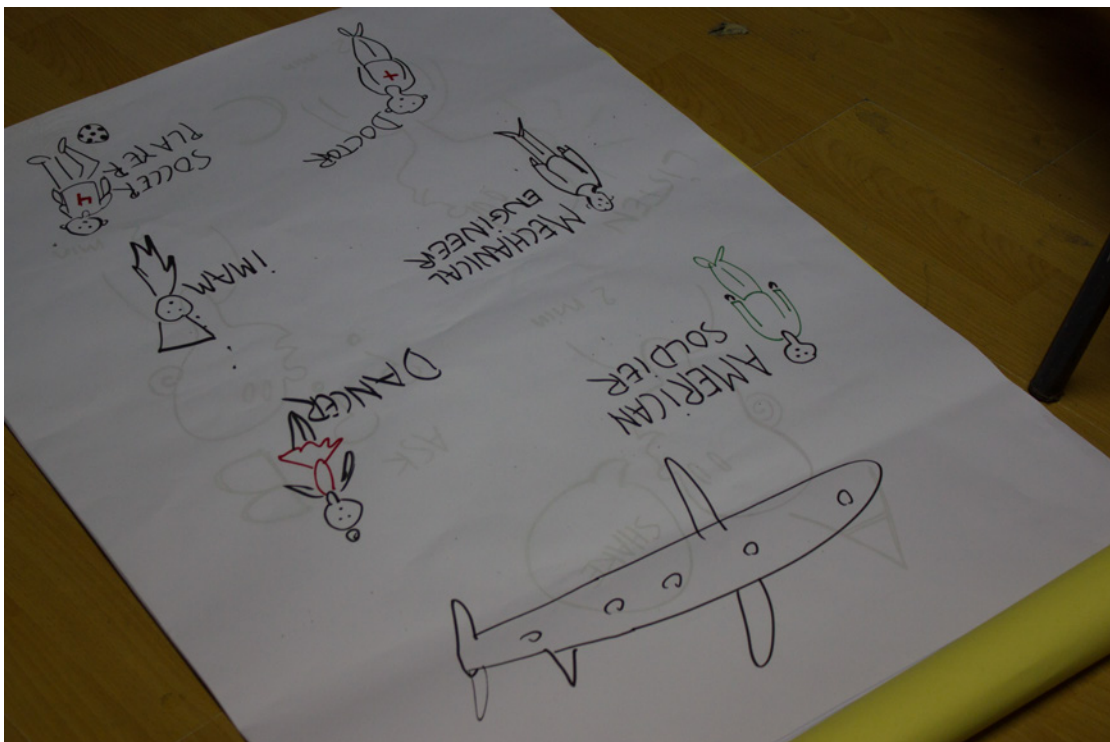
these things. I don't think that the doctors will be, will catch these subtle signs. So in between the sessions and especially after the project... I started going back and use some of the tools we'd learned.

Donya, international ambassador from Denmark, pilot phase and phase 2

27 of the 28 survey respondents who are currently or have previously used dialogue methods in their professional life, use conflict resolution techniques and facilitation skills in their jobs with both ease and success. Overlapping with the organisational focus of the following chapter an example comes from Mohab, an international Egyptian ambassador, who uses dialogue in his job in an NGO to create a space for everyone, especially when people have different political opinions. He uses it in meetings, in his team, to create “a space to express ourselves and find a common ground”. Besides this, he uses the reflection technique both consciously and unconsciously to make sure that he has understood his colleagues. He has held a workshop for his colleagues to share the idea about the iceberg and to connect it with their practice. The workshop was well received and acted as a reminder on something that is hard to remember in a stressful job. Another ambassador describes how he has made use of facilitation skills in his job as a doctor:

On a professional level, I think that the project has promoted my self-esteem. It has allowed me, you know the training that we had in the project, some of these trainings were about facilitation and some of these trainings are about presentation with the skills and all that stuff. So it has really helped me with my work, it has allowed me to overcome my fear about speaking. You know I work as a doctor and we go to a lot of conferences and they also give lectures at the university. And the facilitation skills that we have learned during the project also helped me with my work as an assistant lecturer at university. You know these two techniques I sometimes use during my lectures or my presentations.

Rami, international ambassador from Egypt, pilot phase and phase 2



Workshop participants in Egypt doing an exercise about assumptions

7.3 Using Dialogue in Organisational Life

Of the three mentioned spheres, the impact of working with other organisations and projects, which almost all survey respondents did in between the training seminars, has had the largest positive impact on survey respondents' learning.¹¹⁶ With time fewer ambassadors engage in this kind of setting, and after completing the phase(s) a small decrease in impact can be detected.¹¹⁷ This might also explain that only 18 of the 30 survey respondents are currently using methods, techniques and understandings learned and gained as part of AFD in organisations, initiatives or student groups they are part of. Another 9 have previously used it.¹¹⁸

Like in the ambassadors' professional lives, many ambassadors use their experience with the AFD to open doors to other organisations, where they become involved due to the dialogue qualifications and skills that they have gained from the AFD. The international Egyptian ambassador Rami from the pilot phase and phase 2 has for instance worked with an Egyptian project initiated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, primarily due to his former engagement with the AFD. Many also spread the knowledge about how to work with dialogue in organisational settings either through partnerships that they do in corporation with AFD or separately.

As described in the previous chapter, ambassadors' involvement in organisations may be as professionally employed or as a volunteer. Several ambassadors have since their involvement incorporated dialogue into other organisations that they on either professional or volunteer basis have been part of alongside AFD. As examples, last year the international Jordanian ambassador Karim incorporated dialogue into the health care organisation he has been running the past six years, a national ambassador from Egypt transferred the ideas of dialogue to an initiative for people with disabilities, and a Danish ambassador has incorporated dialogue in his international scout organisation. Karim says:

In the last project in my NGO we invited school kids to plan the project with us. It is a project about school and school kids. So we invited a lot of students and we had a big dialogue session and we came with a project, which was directly accepted because it came from students.

Karim, International Ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

Ambassadors are adopting the participatory approach of the AFD and particularly make use of the dialogue methods and facilitation skills that they have gained. When engaging with other organisations, ambassadors often facilitate workshops on other subjects, but use the form of the AFD programme and take useful elements and exercises with them. Facilitation skills are used by 26 of the 27 respondents who are currently or have previously used dialogue in organisational life, and this with overwhelmingly ease and success. 21 found it very or somewhat easy and 22 found it very or somewhat successful.

¹¹⁶ 11 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 14 'some positive impact', 3 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact' and 1 say 'not part of my AFD experience'.

¹¹⁷ 9 respondents find it to have a 'very positive impact', 11 'some positive impact', 5 'little positive impact', 1 'no impact' and 4 says 'not part of my AFD experience'.

¹¹⁸ 18 are currently using it, 9 have previously used it and 3 have not been able to use it.

Out of the total of 27 respondents who are currently or have previously used dialogue in organisational life 24 have used dialogue exercises with various ease.¹¹⁹ 12 have found it either somewhat or very easy and 16 have found it somewhat or very successful.¹²⁰ Again, it is primarily in situations resembling education that the exercises are easily used. A national Egyptian ambassador e.g. incorporates them in a curriculum for team building activities in her charity.

Also in the organisational context is the ambassadors' dialogical attitudes widely used. All 27 respondents use a dialogical attitude and reflections with relative ease and success – the dialogical attitude a bit more than individual reflections.¹²¹ Ambassadors have in particular had positive experiences with applying a dialogical approach to the internal structures in the organisations of which they engage. Two ambassadors – one from Egypt and one from Denmark – describe how they use dialogue in their scouts work:

I am working in a group similar to something like the scouts in the university. In that group we don't use dialogue at all, there are only orders that we must implement regardless of anything. ... Before joining the ambassadors' project we could spending about 8 to 9 hours in one meeting in disputes. After joining ambassadors for dialog I became responsible for that team and I started to teach them certain dialog tools. I worked on spreading a culture of dialog, and did it through two ways. On the one hand my personal conduct which conveys to them the idea of dialog. They were used to that people would interrupt each other so I started to avoid doing that and I listened to them and asked them follow up questions to ensure I understood them. When any problem or argument would erupt I would say to them: "let's calm down and try to listen to each other and hear each other out". After some meetings I noticed that they had picked up the behaviour and were starting to listen to each other. A year later I realised that we finished the meeting that we used to spend 5 or 6 hours much faster and having taken useful decisions, and things were going smoothly, and it was in a relatively short period. So I felt that I transferred what I had learned and that I had made use of the tools that I had learned and with very good results.

Aya, national ambassador in Egypt since 2013

I use it most in intercultural settings ... (With the scouts) we were renting a big camp in Japan this summer and there was a lot of cultural clashes. ... The concept of what is a good scout camp can be very different. And how is it that we talk about that; we have different approaches to what is good, and make people aware that they have different opinion and that it's okay to have different opinions. ... The product will somehow be in between all these opinions and it might as well be a good camp or a good experience for the young people. So yeah, I think for me it's a leadership tool that if you use it correctly it can be a part of getting leadership positions in different places, because you learn to navigate through different situations. I know some people don't like to talk about

¹¹⁹ 11 respondents find a dialogue exercises 'very easy', 3 'somewhat easy', 5 'neither/nor', 2 'somewhat difficult' and 3 'very difficult' and 3 are 'not using it'

¹²⁰ 9 respondents find it to be 'very successful', 7 'somewhat successful', 6 'neither/nor', 2 very unsuccessful' and 3 are 'not using it'.

¹²¹ 18 find a dialogical attitude 'very easy', 6 'somewhat easy', 1 'neither/nor' and 2 'somewhat difficult'. 18 find a reflections 'very easy', 3 'somewhat easy' and 6 'neither/nor'. 14 find a dialogical attitude 'very successful', 9 'somewhat successful', 3 'neither/nor' and 1 'somewhat unsuccessful'. 17 find a reflections 'very successful', 4 'somewhat successful' and 6 'neither/nor'.

leadership, but for me leadership is not so much to make decision but it's more often to take a specific role in situations and you can do that by using these tools.

Morten, international ambassador from Denmark, pilot phase and phase 2

When used on the internal structure the dialogical attitude can be used to influence the organisational culture, but also as a leadership tool, which can be used to avoid conflicts. 25 of the 27 survey respondents used conflict resolution techniques in organisations, initiatives or student groups they were part of. 19 found it very or somewhat easy, and the same number found it very or somewhat successful. Heba, another Dane, gives an example of, how her organisation has benefitted from being better at listening to each other and hence having fewer conflicts:

I'm the chairman of an organization and we had in our board a lot of problems with people not listening to each other. And when I came back from my first trip, I had learned some tools there – it was something about body language, how you show people that now you are listening, now you are giving them the space, now you are taking the space. Stuff like that. Managing. And all these things you just said, I can totally relate to it. Cos, I took that into my organization and now like... our economy has boosted, like, our events are so much better, we're getting so... people know who we are. And all this came from what I've learned in Jordan, because I've changed the setting of our board. That's my success story.

Heba, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Several of the ambassadors, who came into the AFD programme primarily due to frustrations with the political work they were involved in, have since left their youth parties. They do not claim that there is a connection between this and their involvement in the AFD, but Mads, who remains active in a youth party, says:

I went into it because I was frustrated about the political work and then you just get more frustrated by being in the project. But I think it offers a different approach to talking to people that I try to enhance but it's just a very steep hill that we have to climb to try to change ... some of the political spheres in Danish political youth. Maybe that's not what we want, maybe it's okay that people argue and fight because that makes, that might be what politics is, but it would also be fun to see another perspective. But yes I'm still active, but all time ... it bumps into this wall of arguing, and not listening, and talking to convince, instead of listening to understand. So, for me at least, there's a dichotomy between dialogue and politics.

Mads, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Several ambassadors have also been part of starting up new initiatives inspired by the AFD; among these are dialogue project in Zimbabwe and the new Danish initiative Dialogik mentioned by Marie in chapter 2. Also in Egypt some initiatives have been started. An example is an internationally funded project that simulates change in Egypt. Several ambassadors for dialogue have been involved in the new project and the concepts of dialogue from AFD have been incorporated. A handful of the new volunteers have attended AFD workshops and applied to become part of the national team in Egypt. Other Egyptian ambassadors are working on the idea of starting a 'dialogue society' in Egypt, while Danish ambassadors have applied for funding for a dialogue project in Eastern Europe that they call Culture Next Door.

7.4 Using Dialogue to Shape one's Life

As the three previous paragraphs show, ambassadors are successfully using dialogue in the various spheres they interact in. All together many ambassadors use dialogue actively to shape their lives or experience that their involvement in AFD has in an unplanned manner affected their lives. 24 out of the 30 survey respondents say that being part of the AFD programme has led to significant changes in their lives.¹²² These significant changes take form as changes in ambassadors' mind-sets, changes in studies, changes in careers and even marriages. A Danish ambassador says:

I feel that a lot of major life decisions that I've made the last year, I could somehow directly relate to the project. Like me taking a year of university, breaking up with my boyfriend, finding a new... everything has very much been a process of asking myself very hard questions and challenging myself. Also concretely, I think, ok... I don't know, the question was, what have we learned. Going back to the question... I think I have learned everything I know now about dialogue – almost, yeah. And so much about myself, and so much about many other people because it has given me the tools to kind of open up...

Stine, international ambassador from Denmark, phase 4

Several ambassadors have due to their participation in the AFD programme decided to change their studies towards areas closer connected to dialogue – e.g. communications or political science. Others have actively used dialogue as a tool to create changes in their lives – such as Khalid, who came out as homosexual or Salma who now lives in the USA. Most ambassadors in this impact study are however primarily using dialogue in subtle ways, as they apply the thinking and attitude learned and gained through their involvement in the AFD programme in social interaction.

¹²² 11 'completely agree', 13 'somewhat agree', 4 'neither disagree nor agree', 2 'somewhat disagree'.



Ambassadors at a training seminar in Denmark

CHAPTER 8

8 THE FUTURE OF THE AFD PROGRAMME

In this last chapter we look to the future of the programme. Although the AFD is clearly defined as a *programme*, we here ask the question whether ambassadors also see, or would like to see, the AFD as something more; whether they feel that AFD is, or should be, a *movement*. Finally we outline ambassadors' and stakeholders' perspectives and suggestions on how to improve the ADF programme.

8.1 AFD as a Movement or a Programme

Some international ambassadors from Jordan describe how, by being part of AFD, they feel that a large responsibility has been placed on them. They feel that they now possess knowledge about how to better the current situation in the Middle East – “*why we are killing each other, why we are not listening to each other*” - and they feel responsible for spreading their knowledge, and belief in something “*that leads to peace in general*”. One ambassador describes the idea of dialogue and the AFD programme in this way:

It is like a baby. A small baby. So you have a very big responsibility for it. And even though you are having these moments of doubt, and you don't want to do it you have to stick to it.

Raneem, international ambassador from Jordan, phase 4

This strong belief in the idea of dialogue and feeling of responsibility is closely connected to these ambassadors' feeling of being part of a movement. But whether the AFD is a movement or a programme is a question that divides the ambassadors. Many have their own definitions of what a movement is and opinions about, what is needed for a project to become a movement.

Many believe that the programme is still a programme, primarily because it has a top down structure and not a grass root structure. Some think it should be more visible in the media to be a movement. Others think that to be a movement, it should be more open to the surrounding world. When you compare the AFD to a sect, it really is the complete opposite of a movement, as a Danish ambassador points out.

Others believe that they have been part of starting a movement, because their involvement and dialogical attitude is not something that ends after a workshop, but a mind-set that stays in their life continuously. To some AFD is a movement due to it being a much ‘bigger idealistic idea’ rather than a programme. Also the continuity since 2009, the large outreach in the participating countries and the new initiatives spreading are to some ambassadors a reason for it being a movement. The most accurate would probably be to define AFD as a ‘spirit’. As Tamer, an Egyptian ambassador, who is also a linguist puts it:

It's a social movement ... it's a spirit, it's a lifestyle and yeah, it's moving so yeah, let's call it a movement because it moves, it does not stop.

Tamer, international ambassador from Egypt, phase 3

Others again feel that it is sometimes a movement and sometimes a programme. The time of the international training seminars, where “you feel that all the world is talking about dialogue”, is when it feels like a movement. But when you come back to your daily life and nobody cares about dialogue, time makes it “fade out” and it feels like a programme. When the next training seminar comes, the ‘spirit’ of AFD and the feeling of being part of a movement returns.

While 18 out of the 30 international survey respondents say that they feel part of a movement,¹²³ almost all national ambassadors feel part of a programme.

Most of the national Jordanian ambassadors feel that AFD is programme and not a movement. Completely in accordance with the definition of AFD, they define it clearly as a programme with ‘rules and regulations’, a shared basis for understanding the topic of dialogue and the same methods applied. A few ambassadors see it moving towards being a movement, due to the strong commitment that they feel and the relative high autonomy in their work. They say that a larger programme, specialisation and further learning for those who have been engaged in the programme for several years may strengthen the feeling of a movement.

Neither the national Egyptian ambassadors feel part of a movement because they *are ‘too secluded for that’* and *‘many things are out of our hands’*, as an Egyptian ambassador explains. Some say that AFD to them is a project because they are not ‘dialogical persons 24 hours a day’. They also point to the situation in Egypt being different from the other countries and to the fact that they do not have a physical space in Egypt where both national and international ambassadors belongs. However, some national Egyptian ambassadors say that the dialogue circles are increasing their feeling of a movement. They also believe that the feeling of AFD as a movement rather than a project would increase if the two teams had joint meetings, more insight in each other’s work, had the same training and hence the same level of knowledge and skills.

All together this indicates that the international aspect and the feeling of a shared intercultural project create the feeling of being part of a movement.

8.2 Suggestions on How to Improve the AFD Programme

Throughout the impact study ambassadors and stakeholders have shared perspectives and suggestions on how to improve and develop the AFD programme. Ambassadors too have shared their dreams about what the AFD could ideally look like in the future. In the following, we sum up what they said, mentioning both things pointed out by single individuals as well as multiple ambassadors. Therefore, not all suggestions are representative for all ambassadors. The focus is placed on the development of the AFD programme, and while ambassadors from

¹²³ 10 respondents ‘completely agree’, 8 ‘somewhat agree’, 7 ‘neither disagree nor agree’, 3 ‘somewhat disagree’ and 2 ‘completely disagree’.

all phases suggest improvements, changes may have happened within the programme since their involvement.

Continuity and development

‘Old’ ambassadors from earlier phases, who are no longer part of the international programme, suggest a continuous contact with ambassadors who leave the official part of the programme. This should be done in order to activate the knowledge of old ambassadors, and to motivate them to continue the work from afar. Several ambassadors suggest an international ambassadors’ gathering every two years in one of the three countries, where old and new ambassadors can meet. The purpose would be, to give the ambassadors a chance to continue their learning e.g. what may have changed in terms of techniques since their involvement, and to create a stronger connection between all ambassadors - especially those spread all over the world – which could encourage them to keep spreading the AFD perspective. Continuous learning should neither be forgotten for the international ambassadors who become part of the national teams.

In the lines of continuity, some ambassadors suggest a gathering of all international and national ambassadors in order to review the goals and strategy of the programme. Ambassadors would generally like to have a clearer common programme objective for all participating countries on both the international and national level.

Expansion

Many ambassadors dream of a bigger – perhaps even global – AFD programme including more nationalities and national branches. Ambassadors in particular suggest including the Gulf States, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia. Some of the Jordanian ambassadors dream about creating similar ‘triangular’ programmes with other participating countries such as Sweden, Morocco and Saudi Arabia, or Tunisia, Spain and Japan. Another suggestion is to include other Middle Eastern countries (not Jordan and Egypt) together with Denmark, since some ambassadors argue that the stereotypes from the West are no longer about Jordan and Egypt, but other Middle Eastern countries.

Some ambassadors would like to see the establishment of an independent Ambassadors for Dialogue organisation, others a completely equally structured partnership between the three organisations.

Visibility

Several ambassadors would like to see a higher visibility of the AFD online.

Training seminars

Some international ambassadors suggest a less busy or less structured programme during the international training seminars. A less structured day would give more opportunities for dialogue between the teams and across nationalities. Ambassadors from earlier phases suggest the alternative of an occasional change in structure e.g. mixing the teams to let them do a workshop together, which is currently being practiced.

Some ambassadors find that the programme is too packed. This, in the ambassadors' opinion, made especially the theoretical teaching less impactful, because there was too much to take in. A longer seminar with less costly accommodation is suggested. Other ambassadors however suggest a shorter training seminar, as they find it hard to take time off work. This is particularly relevant if the AFD prioritises to include ambassadors within the working force.

Although DUF is already trying to give ambassadors influence on this, a few ambassadors would like to have a larger influence on the timing of the seminars. They would like to be asked when it suits them, so it does not collide with e.g. exams and ambassadors as a consequence to missing seminars are forced to leave the programme.

To secure a continuing learning process, ambassadors points to the importance of training seminars being held frequently, half a year apart as a maximum, as is the case now. A trainer suggests the use of E-learning in between seminars to support the continuous learning.

In terms of trainers, Danish ambassadors suggest the inclusion of a non-Danish senior trainer to even out the Danish/Arab divide.

In terms of content a few ambassadors would like to see less reflection time during the training seminars.

Workshops

Some ambassadors suggest changes in the workshop, especially on the national level. Ambassadors find the national workshops too short to convey the values of dialogue and want them longer. Some would even like to create short courses rather than workshops. They suggest accepting more people for a course of e.g. six weeks or a larger conference style one-day course or 'camp' with 100-150 participants.

National and societal context

Both stakeholders, national and international ambassadors suggest an overall larger focus on the national and societal contexts of the AFD programme.

At the training seminars, it could be considered to a larger extent to incorporate topics related to the societies of the three participating countries, as well as invite external people to talk about the current situation in the Middle East. This would not only create a larger focus on the societal context of the programme, but also make it more applicable in the ambassadors' daily lives and help balance the large focus on self-development.

Ambassadors from Jordan and Egypt suggest working on adapting tools and exercises in a national context, as topics and questions of the exercises are not applicable in their national context. They enjoy discussing things like religion and sexuality among the international ambassadors during training, but cannot apply it to the various settings at home.

In relation to the national context stakeholders says that they would like to see a larger identification with the DAPP programme on the national level. As AFD is a part of the DAPP programme, the regional coordinator would like to see a larger display of affiliation between the AFD and the DAPP programmes on the national level. This is particularly relevant in Jordan.

Furthermore stakeholders suggest more transparency regarding the foreign governmental funding of AFD. This should be done in order to provide Arab ambassadors with adequate information about the official objectives of the AFD and DAPP programmes, and give them a chance to consider possible risks of participating. This is especially relevant due to the current situation in Egypt.

National work in Egypt

National ambassadors in Egypt see a need for activities for younger people and suggest working with teenagers aged 15-18 years old. This should be done in order to reach the new citizens, pass on the values of dialogue from an early age and work towards co-existence in Egypt. Ambassadors see a need to reach out to young people who get affected by the Muslim Brotherhood and need a place/way to express anger and neutralize negative energy.

Ambassadors would like to have a physical space in Egypt as a base for all AFD activities. In such a space dialogue workshops and circles could be held and people who find interest in dialogue would know where to go. Ambassadors would also like a stronger organisational structure on the Egyptian national level with clearer set roles and responsibilities, more long term planning, and more national ambassadors.

The national team would generally like to see more focus on establishing contact between the national and international levels of the programme. National ambassadors feel that there is an 'A class' and a 'B class' division – the national level being the B class.

National work in Jordan

National ambassadors in Jordan would also like to have more new national ambassadors in order to cover all areas, as there are presently only two ambassadors in each governorate. This would also secure continuity, as many current ambassadors are now working and do not have time to facilitate workshops.

National work in Denmark

Danish ambassadors as well as stakeholders suggest more Danish workshops in socioeconomic challenged areas and with participants of mixed ethnic background. Danish ambassadors also would like to see a stronger national level in Denmark, including dialogue-circles.

The national potential of the AFD programme

Throughout the impact study it has become increasingly evident that the AFD has a national potential, which is currently not being utilized to its full potential in Denmark. Stakeholders note the unused potential too.

As this study has shown, the programme is building up a range of valuable competences in a group of young people. These competences are, however, primarily brought to use in an international context, and there lies a potential for utilizing them further in a national context by strengthening the link between the international and national work at DUF.

The motivation to work nationally in Denmark is not lacking among the ambassadors, which both above suggestions, interviews and the newly started initiative Dialogik proves. The

launch of Dialogik is a positive step towards a national implementation of AFD competences, methods and approach. This initiative is supported by DUF, but not formally anchored within the organization.

It is our assessment that the AFD approach, a range of the dialogical methods and the ambassadors' dialogical competences advantageously could be applied to work nationally in Denmark e.g. on integration and in intercultural settings.

LITERATURE

- Coombs, P. H. with Prosser, C. and Ahmed, M. (1973), *New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth*, New York: International Council for Educational Development
- Cooperride, David et al (2011), *Appreciative inquiry handbook*, Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers
- DeWalt, Kathleen & DeWalt, Billie (2002), *Participant Observation; A Guide for Fieldworkers*, Walnut Creek: Altamira Press
- DIIS (2010), *Interkulturel dialog i praksis. Analyse af et dialogprojekt mellem unge fra Jordan, Egypten og Danmark*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies
- DUF (2010), *Ambassadors for Dialogue 2.0*
- DUF (2012), *The Dialogue Handbook – The art of conducting a dialogue and facilitating dialogue workshops*, Copenhagen: DUF
- DUF (2013), *DUF's MENA Youth Program 2014-2016 – Strengthening Youth Agency*
- DUF (2014), *Criteria for selection new ambassadors 4.0, January 2014*
- DUF (2015a), *DUF's MENA Youth Program – Strengthening Youth Agency. Narrative descriptions of activities in 2015*
- DUF (2015b), *DUF's MENA Youth Program 2014-2016 – Update for 2016*
- Goffman, Ervin (1959), *Presentation of self in everyday life*, New York: Anchor Book
- Ingold, Tim (2000), *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skills*, London: Routledge
- Lave, Jean & Wenger, Etienne (1991), *Situated learning – Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge
- Kimsey-House et al. (2011), *Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing
- Rogers, Alan (2004), 'Looking again at non-formal and informal education – towards a new paradigm', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, www.infed.org/biblio/non_formal_paradigm.htm.
- Smith, M. K. (2009) 'Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger and communities of practice', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm
- Smith, M. K. (2001), 'What is non-formal education?', *the encyclopaedia of informal education*, <http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-non-formal-education/>

Tight, M. (1996), *Key Concepts in Adult Education and Training*, London: Routledge

Wenger, Etienne (1998), *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wenger-Trayner, Etienne and Beverly (2015), *Communities of practice a brief introduction*, <http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

Websites

<http://detarabiskeinitiativ.dk/english/>

<http://duf.dk/dufs-arbejde/dufs-dialogambassadoerer/dialoghaandbogen/>

https://www.facebook.com/Dialogik-697659157007353/info/?tab=page_info

www.artofhosting.org