



A strong international network is an important asset, says Ghanaian Danida fellow Festival Godwin Boateng.

Beyond academics

It is less about 'who you know' but more about 'who knows you'. Danida fellow Festival Godwin Boateng tells his story of the importance of an international network and how it is possible to build it at the cosmopolitan Danish universities.

By Festival Godwin Boateng

I had a huge sigh of relief when I finally received my travelling visa. The long held desire to study abroad had been realised – it was only a matter of days before leaving for Denmark.

My key considerations in deciding on what and where to study were mainly course content, career focus and conducive environment for learning and of course sponsorship.

But the desire to travel, live in a different country and experience a different culture and lifestyle, learn new ideas and ways of thinking were also burning high.

So in my probative evaluation of what the scholarship potentially could benefit me, my mind's eye could only imagine a fulfilled desire to study abroad with my expensive tuition and accommodation fees as well as air tickets and living expenses going to be catered for by Danida.

Of course, as stated in the call for applications, I also knew that I was going to gain "A good knowledge of the Danish society, culture and values and establish lasting relationships with Danish students".

I imagined nothing more.

SHOCKED

Upon my arrival and commencement of my

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1: Beyond academics
- 2: The Course Schedule for 2015 is out
- 3: Update on Development Research Grants
- 4: Power to the people
- 5: New member of the Governing Body
- 6: Goodbye to 2014

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PHOTO: JAN KJÆR

"To succeed in this world you have to be known by people," says Festival Godwin Boateng.

studies in Denmark, I have been overwhelmed by something I never imagined. In one of our introductory classes, we were asked to introduce ourselves. I assumed that the majority of the students were Danes – after all we were in a Danish University. To my dismay, we the international students, outnumbered the Danes.

The class was made up of students from India, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Romania, Kenya, Poland, Germany, Italy, Cameroon, Canada, the US, the UK and several other countries with Denmark being just one of them.

As we all might have learned by now, Denmark is a home to top notch universities with beautiful contemporary programs. The schools are not only well resourced, but they also have efficient non-academic staff to support teaching and learning.

Just as sweet nectars attract birds, Danish universities attract brilliant students and lecturers from all over the globe.

THE LEAPING ADVANTAGE

In the scholarship announcement Danida underestimated that by studying in Denmark we will *"establish lasting relationships with [ONLY] Danish students"* – the networking advantage is far in excess of what Danida conceived. The cosmopolitan nature of Danish Universities means that we are part of a huge population of culturally distinct international students, availing us

platforms for networking and for building lifelong social connections.

Thus, beside academic excellence, Danish universities offer an enviable opportunity to join an international faculty of future global leaders, make friends and establish contacts with people from countries we may never have the chance to visit in our lifetime.

I will at the risk of sounding pedantic, restate that in this ever more competitive world, whilst having certificates with all A's is exceedingly admirable, we all have learned the hard way that certificates and transcripts do not always do the magic – not even on most occasions. Nowadays, it is even less about *'who you know'* but more about *'who knows you.'*

GLOBAL NORTH IS COLD – THE CONTACTS ARE NOT

The world is still largely meritocratic, but the ever growing levels of meritocracy and fierce competition have valorised the need for information, recommendations and contact persons. Today, trust and previous knowledge about people are extremely crucial to annexing most top positions and juicy opportunities. Knowing whom to call can save time, money and effort. Thus having both local and international contacts has become more of a valuable social asset today than ever and it is the latter that our studying in Denmark easily reifies for us.

It is no secret that the weather here in

Europe, and generally in the global North, is unbearably cold. But believe me, given how the world has become socio-geo-economically and politically configured, having European or Western contacts and, for that matter, friends from any other parts of the world is not a cold asset at all.

LET'S CONNECT

So as we busily pursue good grades, it may be worthwhile if we also considered making some good friends as well.

Sometimes, idealistic people are put off by the whole idea of networking as they see it as something tainted by flattery and the pursuit of selfish advantages. But as avowed by one US Supreme Court Judge, Sonia Sotomayor, virtue in obscurity is rewarded only in Heaven. To succeed in this world you have to be known to people.

The people we write group assignments with and the lecturers who supervise our projects and thesis and also handle the various courses we choose to read as well as the funny guys and the beautiful girls we hang out with at the various Fredagsbar (Friday bars) are as good as the colleagues living in the DFC Hostel for networking.

Find all my active e-mail addresses below, let us share contacts, email addresses and connect on the various social media, who knows, one day, just an e-mail or a simple phone call may make the difference.

You don't have to agree with me on this today, but I believe that either future will right me or I will write to you in future.

Let me end by quoting Mike Davidson: "Your book is going to impress, but in the end it is people that are going to hire you." ■

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The Course Schedule for 2015 is out

The programme portfolio for 2015 features less programmes than previous years. This is due to new developments and new services to be offered as a consequence of the launch of Danida Capacity Development Support Programme (DCDSP), which replaced Danida Fellowship Programme (DFP) earlier in 2014.

By Lars Pedersen, Capacity Development Advisor

Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) hereby presents the programme portfolio for 2015.

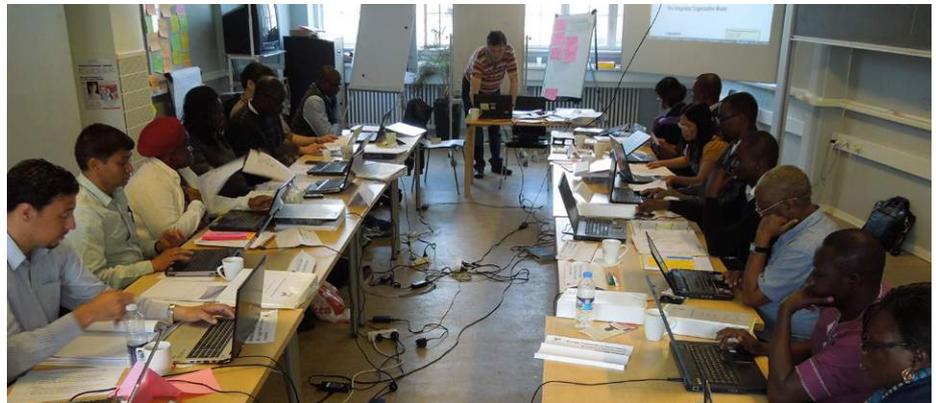
In comparison to 2014, the number of short courses has been significantly decreased in order to allow for development and implementation of new and innovative learning approaches and modalities to support capacity development activities in Danish development cooperation engagements as outlined in the policy for Danida Capacity Development Support Programme (DCDSP).

The portfolio has been prepared considering the following key criteria:

- Reflection of the Strategy for Denmark's Development Cooperation, *The Right to a Better Life* (2012). The Strategy presents four strategic priorities: Human rights and democracy, green growth, social progress, and stability and protection
- Programmes demonstrate a human rights-based approach to Danish development cooperation which is translated into four main principles for all Danish development cooperation engagement: Participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency.

The proposed 2015 programme portfolio and the decision on which courses to continue and which to omit is based on the following two criteria:

1. Which existing courses are in high demand: Such courses are annually revised in order to encompass recent thematic developments as well as recommendations from former participants and their programmes?
2. Which courses are new or re-tendered: These are based on needs expressed through Danish development cooperation



In 2015, there will be significantly fewer short courses.



PHOTOS: JAN KJÆR

tion engagements and/or Embassies in priority countries.

WIDE VARIETY OF COURSES

In line with the strengths of Danida Fellowship Programme (DFP) to address cross-cutting sector specific themes in relation to the public sector and to mainstreaming of policy issues, the 2015 DCDSP programme portfolio includes a wide variety of courses in public sector management as well as cross-cutting issues, e.g. gender, climate change, and sustainable development.

In addition to need-based courses for the public sector and civil society, the 2015 programme portfolio will also include a continued provision of short courses for participants from the private sector. These will mainly focus on thematic areas relevant for business development and growth.

Please refer to the DFC website where the schedule for 2015 is available. The 2015 schedule is constantly updated with course dates and descriptions.

<http://dfcentre.com/courses-studies/course-schedule/2013-course-schedule/>

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN DCDSP FOR TAILORED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

Embassies, programmes, and development

partners are advised to explore the potential of DCDSP as an instrument in capacity development process at partner level in development programmes funded by Danida. DCDSP can provide organizational and institutional learning through tailored activities to deliver capacity changes according to the partners' own plans and strategies.

Embassies, programmes and development partners are most welcome to contact DFC with a view to linking partner institutions in the global South to the opportunities and possibilities of utilizing the DCDSP for the development of tailored support to capacity development processes.

CO-FUNDING FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN DCDSP TO BE INTRODUCED IN 2015

From 2015, private sector participation on short courses will be dependent on the provision of co-funding to the amount of DKK 2,500 per person per week for courses in Denmark and DKK 1,500 per person per week for courses in developing countries. These co-funding requirements are the same as have been required throughout for participation from public sector and civil society. ■



PHOTO: JIAN KJÆR

Call for Applications for Development Research Grants for 2016 is expected to be issued in March or April 2015.

Update on Development Research Grants

Past, present and future application rounds for development research grants within the framework of Danish Development Cooperation

The 2014-round applied for in September 2013, has now been concluded. The round results in the final granting of 14 projects, which will start at the beginning of 2015 and run for about 5 years.

You find the projects granted here: <http://kortlink.dk/dfcentre/fc2y>

2015-ROUND IS ONGOING

The 2015-round is currently ongoing. The Call for Applications 2015, Phase 1, is now closed.

In late November 2014, the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU), an advisory Committee to the Danish MFA, will meet and recommend which Phase 1 applications should be invited to prepare a Phase 2 application. The FFU will assess only 57 of the 151 applications submitted under the Call 2015, Phase 1.

Some applications were rejected for not complying with the formal requirements of the Call. Some applications were not prioritized for further consideration during a national screening process in Ghana, Tanzania, and Nepal.

The applications prequalified at the FFU meeting will be invited to submit a Phase 2 application in March 2015, and the final recommendation for funding by the FFU and

the subsequent selection of the Danish MFA will take place in June 2015. The projects granted can then start from January 2016. The total budget available for the 2015 Call is DKK 155 million (approx. USD 28.4 million). The duration of the grants is up to 5 years, and the grant amount for each project is up to DKK 10 million.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2016

The next Call for Applications (2016) is expected to be issued in March or April 2015 at <http://dfcentre.com/research/calls-for-applications/>. The application deadline will be around September 2015, prequalification (Phase 1) around November 2015, final selection (Phase 2) in June 2016, and project start at the beginning of 2017. Information meetings for applicants will be held in Denmark, Ghana, Nepal, and Tanzania during the months following the Call.

During the application process applicants must identify research partners. When a future applicant for a South driven project searches for a relevant Danish research partner, this can be approached by searching in international scientific databases such as <http://scholar.google.dk/>, <https://www.researchgate.net>, the Danish research database <http://www.forskningsdatabasen.dk/> or similar.

FURTHER INSPIRATION

Inspiration could also be found by searching among ongoing and past projects at the Danida Research Portal at <http://drp.dfcentre.com>, or by entering the Danish Development Research Network website <http://ddrn.dk/intro.html>.

An overview of the universities in Denmark is accessible by link <http://www.dkuni.dk/english>. Here links can be found to each of the eight universities in Denmark and it is possible to search researchers according to subject. If a potential Danish partner institution cannot be identified in this way, further guidance on match making can be obtained from the Research Unit at DFC. ■

FACTS: SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The objective of the Danish support to development research is to generate new knowledge capable of alleviating development problems and strengthening research capacity in Danish priority countries. The administration of the application rounds is handled by DFC for the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The annual Calls for Applications are applicable for both North and South driven development research grant applicants, representing groups of scientists in Denmark, Ghana, Nepal, and Tanzania.

The Calls cover different themes for each of these countries. Applications can only be submitted by a research based institution, and the research projects must be carried out in research cooperation partnerships.

The North driven research projects must be applied for by research institutions in Denmark with partner institutions in Danida priority countries.

The South driven research projects should be applied for by research institutions in Ghana, Tanzania, or Nepal with partner institutions in Denmark. All projects must focus on the research capacity enhancement in the south partner country.

The application rounds consist of two phases, a pre-qualification round (Phase 1) and a full project proposal round (Phase 2). Only a limited number of applications are invited to submit a fully fledged project proposal based on their Phase 1 application.



Danish MP Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen discusses democracy with course participants outside Danida Fellowship Centre in Frederiksberg.

Power to the people

Text and photos: Jan Kjær

I believe in power to the people," says Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen, a young energetic and vocal Member of the Danish Parliament (MP).

57 DFC participants from different courses in Denmark have found their way to the Danida Fellowship Centre Café in Frederiksberg where Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen will discuss Danish Democracy with them.

DENMARK'S ZERO TOLERANCE ON CORRUPTION

The 31 year old politician who has been an MP for the Social Democrats since 2011 is clear when it comes to accountability in a democracy:

"Don't listen to any nonsense from your politicians if they are not taking care of the people. If they don't take care, then protest."

"And free media are essential in a democracy," she adds.

The MP is very aware that democracy is a long term process. It has been for Denmark and it will be so for developing countries, too.

"I know it is so much easier said than done. And it takes time. But I am optimistic."

Not all the participants share the optimism and a long discussion follows. Is democracy really the one viable form of governance?

STRONG AND AMBITIOUS

After the presentation and democracy discussion, Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen is asked what she brings back home after meeting the participants from countries like Bhutan, Indonesia, Ghana, Tanzania, Benin and Uganda.

"It was very encouraging to meet people who are passionate in the discussions and

eagerly looking for new perspectives. It is important to remember that in countries experiencing real struggles and lots of problems regarding governance, you meet people who are ambitious on behalf of their fellow citizens."

Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen is also impressed by the interest for Danish gender equality.

"Many women in these discussions are strong and ambitious with their own strong views and would like to be equal participants in the development of their countries, but they have had more difficulties in doing so in their home countries than I have here in Denmark."

Outside the DFC entrance Ane is talking to some of the course participants while holding her bike.

"Biking through Copenhagen is just the most convenient," she smiles. ■



New member of the Governing Body

Ms Anne Mette Kjær has been appointed a new member of the governing body of Danida Fellowship Centre as per July 1, 2014.

Ms Kjær is replacing Ms Mette Vestergaard, Managing Director of Mannaz, who wished to leave the board. DFC is thankful for the term she has served in the governing body.

Ms Kjær is Associate Professor at Department of Political Science and Government, Aarhus University, and is currently also a member of the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (Forskningsfagligt Udvalg). ■



Goodbye to 2014

As it is getting darker and colder in Denmark, the X-mas holiday season and the end of the year are inevitably getting closer.

This current year, DFC has been engaged with the preparation/ implementation of the new policy for capacity development and improvements of the on-going administration of the Danida research projects.

The new policy for 'Danida Capacity Development Support Programme' was finalized in 2014, and the DCDSP will

aim at providing a broader spectrum of capacity development support initiatives, including training, but also involving other learning approaches. We hope our partners see this capacity development programme just as a potential and useful instrument in the capacity development process at partner level as we do.

The new (second) phase of Building Stronger Universities (BSU) is well under way with agreements signed between

Danish universities and each of the seven selected universities in the South. DFC is looking forward to following the progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

DFC looks forward to working with you in the coming years and hope our good cooperation continues. ■

Happy holiday season!
Anne Christensen
Director