

Danida Fellowship Centre NEWSLETTER



Field work with experience and knowledge in the backpack

In 2011, 43 Danish master students were awarded a field study travel grant offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and administered by the Danida Fellowship Centre.

By Anna Jeppesen, Administrative Officer

From "The nutritional status of adults in a post-conflict area" to "Hydroelectric energy production". The range of topics which our master students work with is immense.

Danida Fellowship Centre administers the travel grants offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The travel grant is given to master students enrolled at a Danish higher education institution to support their thesis field work.

These field studies are very vital for the students' work with their thesis.

The DFC staff often read in the field study reports that essential information would not have been obtained if the students had not been on location.

A LESSON IN CULTURAL TEAMWORK

Tilde Müller studies at the University of Copenhagen and she did her field study in October and November 2011. She is of the opinion that the field study gave valuable experience:

"To me, my time in the Philippines and the collaboration with the Ban Toxics have been highly instructive and I would now be better prepared if I am to work with partners in other countries again."

Also Bo Hønge from Aarhus University Hospital felt he benefitted a lot from his field study last year:

"In the 11 months I spent in Guinea Bissau, I have worked closely together with the local staff at the Bandim Health Project. I have seen how two widely different cultures

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"I have seen how two widely different cultures can misinterpret each other, and experienced how important it is to communicate," says Bo Hønge who spent 11 months in Guinea Bissau.

can misinterpret each other, and experienced how important it is to communicate. People from different cultures certainly react different in some situations, and some things can be highly offensive in one culture, but not in another."

RELEVANCE FOR DANISH DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Danida Fellowship Centre receives many good and relevant applications for a travel grant, but the competition is hard. On average only about 50% of the applicants are offered a travel grant.

In addition to a number of formal requirements to the application, e.g. that the field study must take place in a developing country and have a minimum duration of

one month, the lucky receiver of a travel grant must convincingly argue that the field study relates and is relevant to one or more Danish development programmes/projects in the country of field study. The applicants should therefore be well informed about the ongoing Danish development activities in the country of field study and ensure that their study falls within one or more of these.

43 GRANTS IN 2011

The evaluation of the applications for a travel grant is done in the Research Section of Danida Fellowship Centre.

Last year DFC selected 43 students for the grant. They received between 10,000 - 15,000 DKK in contribution to the many expenses they have in connection with their field study.

In March the Danida Research Portal will be expanded and the thesis abstracts submitted by the students will be included.

Check out the portal here
<http://drp.dfcentre.com/> ■

HOW TO GET A TRAVEL GRANT?

There are two application rounds each year; March 1st and September 1st. The specific details can be found on the DFC webpage <http://www.dfcentre.dk/>
In 2011 the application process became fully electronic on efond.dk and is now close to paperless.



Emerging Leaders Scholarship Programme has come to an end



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided to phase out the Emerging Leaders Scholarship Programme (ELSP) as from 2012. Two of the graduates, Veronica from South Africa and Enoch from Ghana, give their personal account of what the studies in Denmark have meant to them.

By Lene Mosegaard and Jan Kjær

31 year old Veronica Matheba is back in South Africa and 27 year old Enoch Yeboah Agyepong is back in Ghana. Both now hold a Masters degree thanks to the Emerging Leaders Scholarship Programme (ELSP).

And both have benefitted greatly from their scholarship in Denmark offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and administered by Danida Fellowship Centre.

"It was a new learning curve altogether. The teaching style was different and it was inducing how to think independently in different situations. I loved it!" Veronica says.

And Enoch adds:

"I really wish the ELSP did not have to end but could continue for some time so as to offer other scholars such experience."

TO OPERATE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

The ELSP started in 2007. Consistent with Danish policy and priorities, funding was put aside over a five-year period for scholarships to assist selected entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders from Danida's programme countries to take the full-time Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), the full-time Sustainable MBA at Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University or the Master in Science in Agricultural Economics

with a focus on agribusiness at University of Copenhagen.

Furthermore, DFC offers MBAs in South Africa at two internationally accredited Business Schools, namely the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria and Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town.

The aim has been to assist suitable applicants to further develop the initiatives and the potential they would already have demonstrated, and to equip them to operate in the globalized economy.

ELSP scholars have followed the normal MBA or MSc curriculum together with classmates from Denmark and many other countries.

MOST SCHOLARS FROM AFRICA

ELSP was intended to award the majority of its scholarships in Africa, where new jobs and generations of income are essential to sustainable development.

Particular focus has been placed on assisting women to overcome gender-based barriers which hamper their potential contribution to private sector growth.

The ELSP has been designed to contribute to Private Sector Development. Applicants have come from locally-owned private sector companies engaged in business management and entrepreneurship, the financial and banking sector including micro financing, business associations, legislative and regulatory bodies, and academic and training institutes contributing to private sector development.

BUILT IN PROBLEMS IN PROGRAMME SET UP

The programme has now ceased to be part of the DFC course schedule and no new scholars are invited to Denmark.

Despite the positive feedback from scholars such as Veronica and Enoch, DFC director Anne Christensen informs of hitches as well.

"There were some built in problems in the set up. Participants should obtain 10 per cent of the fee from other sources, but in fact we got a lot of young people financing it themselves, pushing their private economy to the limit," Anne told the DFC Newsletter in September 2011. ■

It was worth every hour and effort

By Jan Kjær

Before coming to Denmark in 2010, 27 year old Enoch Yeboah Agyepong had received a 4 year BSc Mechanical Engineering from University of Mines and Technology in Ghana.

In Accra he was Operations Supervisor & Assisting GM of a private engineering service company, Aditech Engineering Limited, serving the oil and gas industry.

From September 2010 to August 2011 he took a Sustainable Master of Business Administration at the University of Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city.

Were the studies in Denmark useful?

My studies in Denmark have been unquestionably worth every hour and effort put in. Talk about coaching, research techniques, personal development and leadership, strategy and implementation, as well as further integration into varied networks in the Danish culture.

How are you in Ghana applying the knowledge gained in Denmark?

Simply put, I am living as an emerging leader with a vision to continually impact the world. Starting from home – Ghana, I have consciously taken to consistently speak at conferences and events as a standard bearer, boldly asking all the 'why' and 'how' questions to get discussions open to the consciousness of sustainability issues and globalization matters.

I coach and support businesses to deploy more practical application of best practices and knowledge based on my core competencies.

Could you say that your studies in Denmark will result in any benefits for the Ghanaian private sector?

With Ghana still struggling particularly on Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability), my zeal and purpose is to strategically impact matters of social responsibility, clean tech and environmental governance – hopefully to also impact policy and the public forever.

A bit of Denmark's Jante Law can be injected into the veins of our culture with effective citizenship education as well. The Jante Law closes the power gaps and collectively aims to offer respect to all, irrespective of age and ethnic differences, and creates opportunities for all.

I am confident that my studies in Denmark will be of tremendous benefit to the Ghanaian private sector particularly to boost sustainable business practices while holding integrity and honesty as high values.

Have the studies made it easier for you to work in the globalized economy?

Indeed, it was a 'training ground' to understand the dynamics of working with others, at different times and on different levels with people from across the world.

The MBA has opened me up much more, and toughened me up as well, placing me confidently on a very high level, in all humbleness. I have with me the tools and passion to succeed anywhere!

Has ELSP helped you in developing your potential as a professional?

Certainly, with tremendous opportunities! Specifically to impact my environment focus, I am blessed to have had the privilege to meet Prof. Wangari Maathai of blessed memory, the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace.

I had interaction and shared knowledge at the Samsø Energy Academy whilst contributing to the 'Next Practice 2030 agenda', towards energy awareness and the future of the energy academy on the island, with other energy experts. International Energy Conference UNEP Risø Centre fostered various interactions with professionals, plus a kick start of personal interactions with Jens Dall Bentsen, Clean Tech Prize 2011 and 2011 Award winner, European Inventor of the Year.

Professionally, I have a very open mind knowing that anything is possible and will continually strive for excellence, holding on to integrity and honesty.



Was studying in Denmark different from you previous educational experiences?

In a lot of ways – yes! An example: consider having mostly studied with limited, and in some cases outdated resource materials, and taken a lot of paper based examinations, then you now engage in a virtual community with vast resources and up-to-date information; one will easily be overwhelmed and struggle to bridge the gap. Overall, the academic approach seemed to acknowledge and appreciate the different learning styles of participants as well as the modes of delivery of the faculty. In addition, appreciation for diverse opinions and view points during lecture room discussions, plus examination and evaluation methods with varied formats, added to the difference.

What has this opportunity finalizing a Master in Denmark meant for you? How has it changed your life?

Oh Yes!!! I now belong to a network of fresh golden nuggets, dynamic and poised global thinkers who are destined to make the world a better place in all they do, everywhere they go.

Considering that there was a huge leap from my natural resource wealthy but still Lower Middle Income Developing Country, with our huge power gaps and cravings for personal enrichment plus a skewed orientation towards success, straight into the adorable ambience of a society with mutual respect for one another, and a High Income

Developed OECD country – the difference was clear! Its real and shared growth can be felt. We need to create the opportunities for all.

BACK IN GHANA

Now Enoch is back in Accra setting up a management consulting firm with focus on

energy, environment and sustainable development in Accra and to blend Scandinavian management techniques to positively impact the Sub Saharan African region. He is also engaged with Global Citizen A/S as a contact and coordinator to pioneer and advocate knowledge sharing, building networks, & generating solutions on globalization issues.

(<http://www.globalcitizen.net/>). Furthermore, he is Head, Quality Assurance & Corporate Development, in partnership with a colleague in Sigma Strategic Business Consult Limited; a business strategy, project management and performance improvement consulting firm (www.sigmastrat.com). ■

It made it easier to understand how globalization works

By Jan Kjær

31 year old Veronica Matheba studied at University of Copenhagen from 2009-11 and under ESLP she obtained a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics specializing in agribusiness and food economics.

After the study leave she is now back as economist in the Lipopo Department of Agriculture in South Africa.

How are you in SA applying the knowledge gained in Denmark?

The knowledge of agricultural policy, econometrics and agribusiness learned in the programme made me realize how we can solve the challenges facing SA agriculture as a sector.

Econometric theory can be used to test the policies in place whether they are yielding results or not, and the recommendation thereof on how our agricultural policies can be amended for the better of our economy.

Did your studies in Denmark result in any benefit for the South African agribusiness?

Denmark and SA are two different countries, in terms of how they developed their agribusinesses. But we learned about models Denmark used in developing their agribusinesses which might not be transferred to South Africa as they are, but need some kind of modifications to suit SA situations.

Has the studies made it easier for you to work in a globalized economy?

My studies made it easier for me to understand how the globalized economy operates, and the advantages and disadvantages of the globalization especially on the developing countries like SA.

Has ELSP helped you in developing your potential as a professional?

Oh yes! As I always wanted to further my studies to learn more in the field of agric economics the scholarship provided me with the skills, expertise and exposure I needed in my career. The only one thing I wanted so much was to get an internship and apply what I learned in the real world especially in Denmark, which would have given me a sense of the practicality of what I have learned.



Was studying in Denmark different from your previous experiences?

Oh yes! It was a new learning curve altogether. The teaching style was different and it was inducing how to think independently in different situations. I loved it!

What has this opportunity finalizing a Master in Denmark meant for you?

It meant growing in my career with international experience! That's awesome. Not everybody gets such opportunity, I felt blessed and thank God for such an exposure in my career path.

How has it changed your life?

I have an international exposure, skills and knowledge that can be used to climb my career ladder. ■

MANY FELLOWS HAVE GAINED BY PARTICIPATING

DFC Director Anne Christensen confirms that many fellows have gained by participating in the ELSP programme, and that the programme in this respect has been a success.



Congratulations to Ilselil Halby who is celebrating her 25th Anniversary at Danida Fellowship Centre.

2+2 = 4

Three very different educational backgrounds and not making use of any of them. This is the reality of 62 year old Ilselil Halby who celebrates her 25th Anniversary at Danida Fellowship Centre.

By Jan Kjær

Originally a hairdresser, then a draughtsman and finally she took a MSc in Anthropology at the University at Copenhagen. But now Ilselil Halby celebrates 25 years at Danida Fellowship Centre as financial and personnel officer dealing with financial management, employment conditions, payments of allowances, and wages.

"Imagine, I have taken three different educations, and I am not making use of any of them," says Ilselil Halby with a smile.

WHY NOT?

In fact Ilselil began her unorthodox career at DFC 7-8 years earlier as junior staff while studying at the university. In 1978 she started by meeting fellows in the airport,

and slowly more tasks were added. In 1987 when she graduated as an anthropologist she got her first employment contract.

"I was actually not particularly interested, but the then director of DFC, Line Vestergaard said it was a benefit to have administrative experience. So I thought: Why not? I knew anthropology was not a money spinner and it was convenient with some sort of income."

Ilselil gave DFC a chance which has developed into a long career.

"It's shocking to realize that I have been here for so many years. It's just too much. But it has been enjoyable and fun. I have great colleagues and it is a really good work place fitting my temper very well."

To cope with the tasks at DFC, Ilselil has later taken a Diploma in Personnel Man-

agement at the Danish School of Public Administration.

ARE COMPUTERS REALLY NECESSARY?

Ilselil has worked in three different DFC locations. She started in Dronningens Tværgade, then went on to Frederiksborggade, and 20 years ago it was decided to build the present headquarters at Frederiksberg. She was part of the committee overseeing the construction and it was an exciting challenge to be part of organizing it. The developments in DFC over the years have been enormous.

"I remember when we got the first computer and the bookkeeper and I talked about whether it was necessary at all. You must think, I am kidding," Ilselil jokes. When she started, there were six employees and rules were less strict. Now there are 18 employees working at the DFC office and a lot has changed.

"Nowadays when we hire a junior staff we write an employment contract. I was here

for the first ten years without signing one sheet of paper," Ilseil says.

THE POWER OF MEETING PEOPLE

The professional highlights of her long career are many, but one stands out.

"Meeting so many different people with so many different interests and backgrounds has really been one of the greatest experiences working at DFC," Ilseil says.

"Today, I am not so much in contact with the fellows as earlier – only if I happen to have given them too small an allowance," she adds with a big grin.

The orientation courses in Denmark where the fellows got information about

Danish culture and living conditions have also been some of the more interesting tasks for Ilseil. But what has made her continue at DFC for so many years?

"I have stayed here at DFC for so long because I always had new tasks and new challenges. And we are doing things differently all the time," Ilseil says.

"I have a good working environment with good colleagues and I also like my job. I am trained to be a researcher, where you always discuss how things work. Now I work with numbers and I like it, as it is unquestionable. 2 + 2 is four. If it is not four, you must find out why."

One of the challenges during the years has been the cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because staff is often replaced, and this affects the institutional memory.

DIVERSITY IS A KEYWORD

Ilseil does not consider herself to be mainstream.

"Material things do not interest me. What is important is how you feel about yourself," she says.

"I am not particularly Danish, but more international in my approach to life. This is reflected in my studies, but not in my background which is traditional Danish working class. My father was a craftsman, my mother worked in a factory."

Ilseil lives in Blågårdsgade at Nørrebro, the most multicultural part of Copenhagen. "I love Nørrebro," says Ilseil. "Nørrebro is like living in a village. It takes time to go shopping on a Saturday morning, because there are so many people to talk to or to drink a cup of coffee with – because the sun shines."

"I love the diversity. I like the fact that there is room for everyone."

SNAPSHOTS FROM MOROCCO

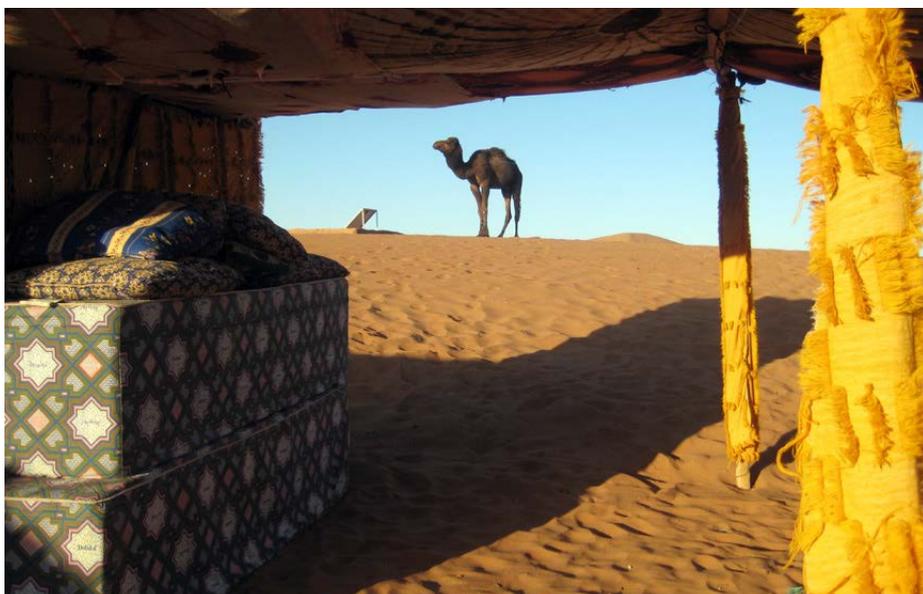
Although working in an international organisation working as financial and personnel officer has not resulted in a lot of travelling. Only once she was sent to Tanzania on duty travel. But Ilseil loves travelling and she just returned from two weeks living on the border of Sahara in Morocco.

"The trip to Morocco was a gift to myself celebrating the 25 years anniversary at DFC. I stayed with the Sahrawi tribe which is very similar to the Tuaregs. The men wear scarves covering the head and often also the nose and mouth."

Under the hot Saharan sun Ilseil also found time for one of her hobbies: photography.

"I like to take pictures and have done so for many years. I especially fancy zooming in on small details. But where do I exhibit my photos?" Ilseil asks.

The hobby actually partly derives from her work at DFC. At the then International Student Centre there was a darkroom, and she made a start by developing black and white photos. ■



Ilseil is a dedicated photographer which these snapshots from her recent Morocco trip prove.

