



An increasing self-awareness has taken place among course participants. Photo: Jan Kjær

A look into the past and the future

The 2012 evaluation of Danida Fellowship Programme recommended that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should formulate a new policy for the programme. This work is currently taking place – and in that context, we have asked Jeef Bech Hansen to reflect on changes in the programme over the years and what the future could hold.

By Mikkel Schnack Sørensen, freelance journalist

“Who in the North made this?” This was the question that one of the participants posed Jeef Bech Hansen during his latest course ‘Public Sector Leadership’ and it may at first seem like an accusation towards the course and the one who developed it.

The next question ‘How can I get in touch with him and learn more about the process?’ shows, however, that the scholarships encompassed in the Danida Fellowship

Programme (DFP) have developed positively since the beginning of the ‘90’s.

MORE REFLECTIVE AND CRITICAL COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Jeef Bech Hansen has, as course manager and facilitator, witnessed this development at close range. He is one of the people in Denmark who holds the longest experience working on DFP assignments,

“Previously, it was an eye-opener for the participants to experience how we do things in Denmark. As the participants have moved on from an educational Bache-

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For almost 20 years, Jeef Bech Hansen has been involved in DFP activities as a consultant, facilitator, and manager of learning programmes.

lor-level to being very resourceful Master-level graduates, who have been to Europe and the US several times, they are more reflective and critical towards the concepts and approaches which have been developed in Denmark," says Jeef Bech Hansen.

According to Jeef Bech Hansen, it is the intentions in the Paris-Declaration which have shone through to today's Danida fellows.

"As they have become increasingly capable of managing their own work and they have gained insight into values and ideas from abroad, an increasing self-awareness has taken place. This indicates that a 'South ownership' has manifested itself," he says.

FROM TOOLS TO THEMES

Jeef Bech Hansen acknowledges that Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) has supported this development as they simultaneously have designed the courses to have a more reflective and conceptual approach.

"Back in time, when the courses typically lasted 8-12 weeks, they were more about transferring evidence and factual ways of planning projects. Today, the courses last 2-5 weeks and they revolve around discussing ideas and themes. In other words, they have changed from being tool-based to being theme-based exploring new possibilities. I, for one, have ceased to introduce our

way of planning work processes as they are second nature to them in the form of ministerial guidelines and procedures at home. Instead, we take a step beyond and discuss which factors influence the change that we are planning."

MOVING FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

In terms of moving the geographical location for the courses from north to south, Jeef Bech Hansen reckons that DFC has made a great effort.

"Earlier, the courses were based on a need, which was articulated in the south, or an interpretation of it, and then DFC arranged the courses, did the tender material and kept an eye on the Danish tenders. This has changed so that DFC now has a more facilitating role aiming at making the south organizations gain an understanding for the need for developing the competencies and find out whether they can meet the requirements at Southern-based Training Institutions (STI) or together with the Danish organizations."

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Apart from adapting this, more innovative approach, Jeef Bech Hansen thinks that DFC should be recognized for having and utilizing the cultural understanding which is necessary for appraising the potential for future collaborations with STIs.

"Every training institution or organization has a culture and a power structure which means that some things are possible - sometimes despite the fact that there does not exist a clear basis for it, while in other places the basis is there, but it is not possible nevertheless."

As an example, Jeef Bech Hansen points out that it is not enough just to look at the training institutions' vision and mission; It is also important to look at the ownership and whether there is support at management and facilitator level to engage in DFC-supported courses as they are often extra courses which are added to the institution's regular tasks.

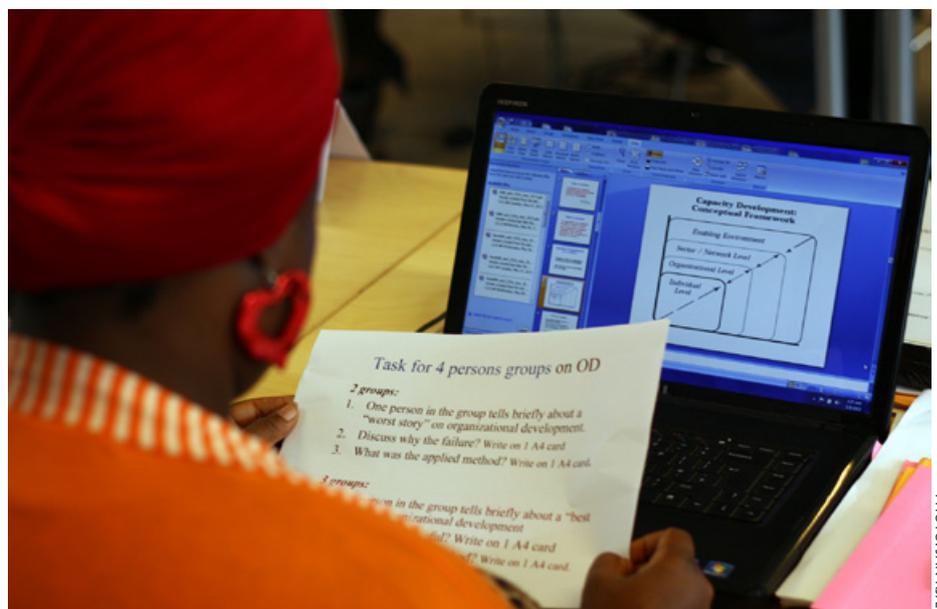


PHOTO: JAN KUER

A LONG WAY FOR LITTLE MONEY

On a more practical level, it is important to find out if the work procedures and salary systems allow the staff to engage in DFC-supported courses. This requires an understanding of the culture and how the organizations work – and there are only DFC's three training advisors who can determine this and start up the processes which ensure that the STI is able to handle the courses in the future.

"This is a very intensive process and DFC has been very good at it," says Jeef Bech Hansen and underlines that the effort must be considered in the light of the fact that DFC operates on a funding of 40 million DKK out of a Danish support scheme which can be counted in billions.

"If you look at how many courses DFC offers in the south today, you will find that they have come a long way for relatively little money. DFC must, however, maintain its close bond with the STIs as the DFC courses is only a small part of what they do. If DFC does not continually have a friendly and clarifying dialogue with them, there is a risk of the courses dying out," he says.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Apart from making sure that DFC features a relevant catalogue of courses, DFC is also responsible for recruiting the right participants, meaning employees who have the appropriate profile for employing their newly earned knowledge to implement changes in the organizations they work in. In this respect, Jeef Bech Hansen sees room for improvement:

"As long as the information to the organizations must go through the DFC counterparts at the embassies, it becomes dependent on individuals. How active and experienced are the employees in question? Do they know the sectors that Danida supports in their country? And do they know who to contact in the organizations? If DFC communicated directly with the organizations, I think the participants' superiors would be more supportive as they would be more involved."

"It must be avoided that the participants return to a void because the rest of the organization is not yet ready for change. Also, there is a risk that the best employees - the ones who can drive the change - will be held back as they are viewed as potential threats to their superiors."

SUCCESS DEPENDS ON PREPARATIONS

Basically, a successful training course depends on the preparatory work and in this respect Jeef Bech would like capacity analysis to be used. Formally, Danida demands that a capacity analysis always takes place in relation to sector support. That rarely happens though.

"It is important to carry out a sector capacity analysis to find out which organizations that are key in terms of leadership and professional management in that sector. This analysis ought to form the basis for identifying which key members of staff in, for instance, financial and professional management who you would like to train further," the experienced course coordinator says and concludes:

"But it requires that you allocate resources to perform capacity analysis and that Danida gives a mandate to either DFC, the embassies or the programmes to make sure these things are carried out. Until this happens, I believe it will be difficult for DFC to realize its full potential." ■

WHO IS JEEF BECH HANSEN?

Jeef Bech Hansen holds degrees in Organizational Learning Processes and in Educational Planning in Developing Countries.

For almost 20 years, he has been involved in Danida Fellowship Programme (DFP) activities as a consultant, facilitator, and manager of learning programmes. Thus he has developed a unique in-depth understanding of DFP and of DFP learners.

His experience covers appraisal, evaluation and reviews of capacity development programmes including organizational and institutional assessments; educational analysis and planning; and, formulation, management and evaluation of international institutional, organizational and human resource development interventions.

He has worked in more than 20 countries in Africa and Asia for a large number of different clients and held positions at Aarhus Technical College, Rambøll and Copenhagen Development Consulting.

Apart from having his own consultancy Capacity Trust, Jeef Bech Hansen is currently employed as Professional Manager at Civil Society in Development (CISU).



Today, the DFC courses revolve around discussing ideas and themes. Photo: Jan Kjær

Good response from South universities



PHOTO: ANNE CHRISTENSEN

Anna Temu at Sokoine University near Morogoro in Tanzania was one of the people visited.

Major changes have taken place in the Building Stronger Universities programme. Danida Fellowship Centre's director Anne Christensen took part in a mission to explain the new developments to the now seven universities.

Text: Jan Kjær, Better-World.dk

Anne Christensen, director of Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC), has just returned from a hectic but rewarding trip taking her to three universities in Tanzania and one in Uganda. Her journey lasted for 10 days and she did not spend more than two nights in the same place.

DFC Newsletter met her to ask her how she views the Building Stronger Universities (BSU) programme after her visits.

DIFFICULT PROCESS

The BSU programme has gone through a difficult patch over the past year where major changes have been implemented.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark has taken charge of the process, leading to a new project document (see story in Newsletter December 2013). Furthermore, Nils Boesen, a process consultant, has been hired to act as a bridge between the ministry and the universities.

The mission of the team was to explain the new changes to the selected universities. This

group consisting of representatives of the ministry, the process consultant, and including the DFC director focused on Tanzania and Uganda.

Similar visits have been made to Ghana and Nepal, which are the host countries of the remaining three universities under the BSU umbrella.

MORE MONEY FOR FEWER UNIVERSITIES

"We thought people would have been somewhat reserved. But that wasn't the case at all," says Anne Christensen.

On the contrary, the staff members at the four universities in Tanzania and Uganda were very appreciative.

The reasons for their contentment are many, but one is very obvious. Much more money will be allocated to the remaining seven universities. Eleven universities used to share 60 million DKK over 2 years; now only seven universities will share 100 million DKK over three years. In addition the south share of the grant has increased.

DFC was not in charge of the changes made to the BSU programme, and this more neutral role is now an advantage, says Anne Christensen.

"It's been a great opportunity for us to meet the universities and inform them what we stand for," observes the director.

BIGGER DFC ROLE

DFC will have a bigger role to play in the new set-up.

"In Phase 1, we received the financial reports and transferred the funds. Now we will monitor things more closely. We'll ask questions about how projects are progressing and come up with ideas for changes," Anne Christensen explains.

From now on, the projects are to submit progress reports and financial reports twice a year.

"We're a bit apprehensive about the number of reports. It'll certainly be a challenge to us," the director acknowledges.

A challenge facing the seven universities is to actually make use of the funds to strengthen research capacity. BSU funds can't be used for development research as such, and only a small amount for physical facilities.

"Some of the universities might end up not using all the funds allocated," Anne Christensen explains.

Danida has realized that the bigger DFC workload requires more staff and resources, and DFC has employed Lars Arne Jensen per March 1, to strengthen the research unit (See presentation of new Project Administrator on next page).

BETTER USE OF SYNERGIES

While visiting universities in Tanzania, Anne Christensen also managed to meet people from other DFC programmes, at the same universities that were visited under the BSU umbrella.

One of them was Anna Temu at the Sokoine University near Morogoro in Tanzania.

"This was an added value," observes Anne Christensen.

In 2008 Anna Temu won the FFU project 'Development of Enterprises in Solar Drying of Vegetables and Fruits for Employment Creation.'

Recently her project was extended and now has even wider and more interesting perspectives under the name of 'Growing Innovative Entrepreneurs through Action Research in the Agri-business Value Chain in Tanzania.'

"This is a very good example of a South-driven project, and we hope that DFC can assist in making better use of the synergies between the different research activities that Danida supports," the DFC director concludes. ■



PHOTO: JAN KLÆR

Call for applications and proposals

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The next Call for Applications for North Driven Development Research Projects from Danish institutions and for South Driven Development Research Projects from Ghana, Tanzania, and Nepal, will be issued on **20 March 2014**, at <http://dfcentre.com/research/calls-for-applications>

Here, you can also find details about the information meetings for applicants, which will be held in Denmark and in Ghana, Tanzania and Nepal in April and May 2014.

Uganda covered by the Building Stronger Universities II is issued. Look at <http://dfcentre.com/research/building-stronger-universities-bsu>.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

A Call for Partnership Proposals from 8 selected Danish universities, which will serve as the basis for match-making with the 7 universities in Nepal, Ghana, Tanzania, and

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has arranged an information meeting for interested Danish researchers and universities on **11 March 2014** at 14:00-16:00 at Eigtveds Pakhus, Conference Room II. ■

New DFC staff

NEW PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR IN RESEARCH UNIT

At Danida Fellowship Centre we are happy to welcome our new staff member, Lars Arne Jensen, who began his work as a Project Administrator in the Research Unit on 3 March.

Lars Arne Jensen is 42 years old and holds a degree in Agricultural Science.

He has previously worked with research and university administration, and he has worked in Africa. His latest placement was at Institute of Plant

and Environmental Science, Copenhagen University, where he was employed as a Research Coordinator.

His main tasks at DFC will be:

- Administration of contracts with universities under the Building Stronger Universities Programme.
- Planning and facilitation of courses including project- and budget management.
- Similar tasks within DFC's administration of Danida Research Grants



Lars Arne Hansen holds a degree in Agricultural Science.



38 years of working experience!

NEW CLEANING LADY

We are also happy to welcome Gitte Bundgaard as our new cleaning lady. Gitte started last year as replacement in the

position and was permanently employed from 1 March. Gitte is 56 years old and has 38 years of experience within the cleaning field. ■