

## AMBASSADORS FOR DIALOGUE - EXTENDED IMPACT STUDY



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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the Extended Impact Study of the Danish Youth Council's (DUF) programme Ambassadors for Dialogue (AFD) - an intercultural dialogue programme in cooperation between the WE Centre in Jordan, the Egyptian Youth Federation (EYF) in Egypt and DUF. The extension builds on the first phase of the impact study conducted by Als Research in 2015, and together the two phases make up the complete impact study of the AFD programme. The extended impact study was conducted for DUF over the period June to December 2016.

The extended impact study is a primarily qualitative study based on interviews with 53 persons related to the selected cases, as well as participant observation. Additionally, the study draws on quantitative data from an online survey among 170 young volunteers.

Als Research would like to thank all informants who participated in the study. Without your contributions, personal experiences and opinions this extended 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 for assistance in regards to collecting data for the Jordanian and Egyptian cases respectively.

The impact study has been conducted by consultants Line Seidenfaden and Kira de Hemmer Jeppesen. The responsibility for all results and conclusions is placed solely on Als Research.

Copenhagen, March 2017

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT STUDY

### 1.1. Objectives of the Extended Impact Study

In 2015, DUF conducted an impact study of the *Ambassadors for Dialogue* programme (AFD), with the main objective of exploring and documenting the intended and unintended impact of the programme on its core volunteers – the ‘ambassadors for dialogue’ - both in terms of *results* and *process*. Hence, the first phase of the impact study focused primarily on the learning of the ambassadors; what the ambassadors learned and gained from their participation in the programme, which significant changes it lead to in their lives, how, when and where the ambassadors learned and lastly how and where ambassadors use what they have learned and gained from their participation in the programme.

This extension and second phase of the impact study builds on the first phase, setting out to explore and document the impact of the AFD programme on the world as a result of activities *within* as well as *outside* the ‘sphere of control’ of the programme.<sup>1</sup> The ‘sphere of control’ is here defined as settings within the programme, i.e. national and international training of volunteers and dialogue activities organised by - and carried out by volunteers from - one of the three partner organisations (DUF, EYF and WE Centre). Hence, ‘outside the sphere of control’ makes up settings outside the programme, in which ambassadors or other persons influenced by the AFD programme implement dialogue. In this proposal and ToR we shall call this impact on the world the ‘extended impact’.

The objective of exploring and documenting the extended impact of the AFD programme will in this study be reached through a mapping of programme related activities, the unfolding of best practice cases and a best practice assessment summing up examples of extended impact.

The first phase of the impact study touched on this matter of *impact on the surroundings*, as it examined the ambassadors’ subjective opinion on how and where they use what they have learned and gained from the AFD programme – in private, professional and organisational life.

The objective of the second phase is to create an overview of all programme related activities – both those *within* and *outside* the sphere of control - and a deeper insight into the *ripple effect* that the AFD programme may have on the world via ambassadors (or other persons in proximity to the AFD programme), as they conduct workshops in settings outside the programme, employ and implement dialogue in workplaces, organisations and educational institutions or initiate new dialogue projects.

Through the study of extended impact, DUF aims to gather knowledge and documentation on

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<sup>1</sup> Terms of Reference, draft 2015

best practice when it comes to extending the impact of the AFD programme beyond its immediate beneficiaries – the ambassadors for dialogue as well as workshop participants.

DUF furthermore aims to develop the current self-evaluation practice of workshops, including indicators for immediate and more long-term impact for participants.

As with the first impact study, DUF's motivation for carrying out the second phase of the impact study is dual. First, DUF seeks to gain insights from the study in order to further develop and strengthen the AFD programme – in particular pertaining to best practice regarding the anchoring of dialogue in various settings. Second, 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 programme's impact beyond its core volunteers.

## 1.2. The Purpose of the AFD Programme in Short

The AFD programme is a co-operation between the WE Centre in Jordan, the Egyptian Youth Federation (EYF) and DUF and began as a pilot project in 2009. The programme is funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Danish Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP). The overall aims of the AFD programme currently are to:

- Foster a dialogical culture among youth (in Denmark and the Arab world); to inspire youth to be and become more dialogical – and practice more dialogue – in their daily lives.
- Enhance mutual understanding between youth in Denmark and the Arab world (Egypt and Jordan), and between youth in Jordan and Egypt.
- Enhance mutual understanding between youth across ethnic, religious, ideological and other divides *internally* in Egypt and Jordan (and other Arab countries).
- Strengthen DUF's member organisations' international work and partnerships (funded by DUF).

In the greater scheme of things, the intention of the programme is thus to counter polarization and promote peaceful coexistence between and among youth in Denmark and in the Arab world.

In practice, young volunteers from Jordan, Egypt and Denmark receive training in dialogue (experience, practice and implementation) and workshop facilitation, and are thus built as 'ambassadors for dialogue'. There are approximately 25 ambassadors/volunteers engaged *internationally* at the same time for a two-year period, and new international ambassadors are recruited every second year. The international ambassadors implement interactive and participatory dialogue workshops for youth in Jordan, Egypt and Denmark – engaging them in dialogue about values, culture, religion and other issues of relevance for the youth. Gathering once in each country throughout a two-year cycle, they implement intercultural workshops in teams of four (one Jordanian, one Egyptian and two Danes, one of whom has Arabic/Muslim background).

In between and after the intercultural activities, the ambassadors – together with locally trained national ambassadors and former international ambassadors – implement national activities in their respective countries. Currently, approximately 40 locally trained national ambassadors (not engaged at the international level) are actively engaged in the programme in Egypt and Jordan respectively.

Since 2009, dialogue activities have been implemented for approximately 20.000 youth (May 2016) in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark (and a smaller number in other Arab countries) within the framework of the programme. Thus far, 120 volunteers from Egypt, Jordan and Denmark have been trained and engaged as *international* ‘ambassadors for dialogue’. And in total, approximately 300 volunteers/ambassadors have been engaged on the national and international level.

### 1.3. The Five Phases of AFD

The AFD programme began as a pilot project in 2009 focusing on the development of ‘methods for effective dialogue between youth in Denmark and the Arab world’. In 2010 – 2011, a second phase was implemented focusing on enhancing Danish-Arab understanding, and searching for ways to ‘anchor’ the dialogue methods in the ambassadors’ own organisations.

In 2012 – 2013, focus on the anchoring of the developed dialogue methods in various organisational and institutional contexts was strengthened, while enhanced Danish-Arab understanding remained the defining objective.

In its fourth phase (2014-2015), while Danish-Arab understanding remained essential, focus shifted further towards fostering a dialogical culture and bridging internal divides among youth internally in Jordan and Egypt.

In the fifth and current phase (2016-2017) a new focus has been placed on keeping former international ambassadors involved in the programme via a so-called TRACK B. This is based on the aim of strengthening and supporting the outreach and impact – the ‘rings in the water’.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the AFD partner organisations are currently (May 2016) in the process of expanding the programme to Tunisia by means of – and in cooperation with – a local partner organisation.

### 1.4. Methodological Considerations and Criteria of Success

A study of the extended impact of the AFD programme entails a number of methodological considerations. Furthermore it calls for a definition of the criteria of success related to the extended impact.

The criteria of success regarding an extended impact is, in this study, defined as a positive

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<sup>2</sup> Ambassadors for Dialogue 2016-2017 – a Concept paper

change within the community, organisation, workplace or educational institution in which the ambassador for dialogue, or another person in proximity to the AFD programme, engages. This positive change may take the form of an increased ability to collaborate, fewer conflicts, improved listening and communication skills, less prejudice, an increased understanding of others and their opinions etc. – a way of ‘being in the world’. Hence, the success criteria of an extended impact may not be visible in the form of dialogue exercises or activities, but may rather be internal, inherently subjective and subsequently challenging to measure.

Therefore, this study - as did the first impact study - relies heavily on the subjective experiences of the persons involved in the selected settings of research, these being the ambassadors or the persons surrounding the ambassadors. The results of this impact study therefore rely on the interviewees' abilities to detect and describe experiences of change – where and if they are present.

As a ‘best practice’-impact study, this methodological challenge is minimized. This is done at the cost of including those settings where the impact is less noticeable.

### 1.5. Data Set and Research Methods

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

The *qualitative* data set is made up of interviews with a total of 53 persons involved with AFD and the seven described cases, as well as participant observation at three settings related to the cases.

The *quantitative* data set is made up of a survey distributed to and completed by 170 international and national ambassadors for dialogue, as well as other volunteers that have been active to a certain degree in the participating countries.

#### **Interviews with 53 persons involved with the seven cases**

The cornerstone and most important data set of the extended impact study consist of semi-structured interviews with 53 persons involved with the seven cases. Participants for the interviews were recruited by DUF, EYF and the WE Centre. Each case has been built around three levels of interviewees; the ambassador who has initiated or been responsible for the implementation of dialogue, a manager of the organisation or initiative and participants taking part in activities of the initiative.

A significant priority of the study was to conduct the interviews in person and thus the consultants travelled to Egypt and Jordan during the months of September and October 2016 to conduct interviews and participant observation. The 53 interviewees were interviewed either individually or in groups consisting of three to eight persons, depending on the type of respondents. In general, managers and ambassadors have been interviewed individually, while participants have been interviewed in groups. A few interviews were conducted individually via Skype.

Interviews were conducted in English with the use of an Arabic-English interpreter. A few interviews with international ambassadors have been conducted in English without interpreter. The interviews have subsequently been transcribed in English. Due to difficulties regarding one of the employed interpreters, it was necessary to translate two of the interviews from Arabic into English. This has had an influence on particularly one case (#4), which therefore is described less comprehensively.

### **Interviews with programme and project coordinators**

In order to gather insight on the implementation of dialogue, interviews were conducted with programme and project coordinators of EYF and WE Centre in addition to the interviews with case specific persons. These interviews were conducted in English as one-on-one interviews at locations in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark. The interviewed programme and project coordinators are:

- Rana Gaber – Programme Coordinator for the AFD programme, EYF
- Amr Abdel – Programme Assistant, EYF
- Mahmoud Hishmah – Programme Coordinator for the AFD programme, Founder and Director of the WE Centre
- Afnan Halloush – Senior Projects Coordinator, WE Centre

### **Participant observation**

In conjunction with interviews for the cases, participant observation has been carried out at three settings directly related to a case in each country; Selmya Movement in Egypt, Nazal School in Jordan and Øregård Gymnasium in Denmark. During participant observation the consultants have taken the role of mere observers sitting behind the circle of participants during workshops (Selmya and Øregård), and as bystanders at a dialogue event held in the schoolyard of Bishop's School in Amman, Jordan.

### **Survey among national and international ambassadors, as well as other volunteers**

The quantitative data set, and the primary source of the mapping of programme-related activities, consists of an online survey conducted during the months October - November 2016. The online questionnaire included 16-46 questions, depending on the activity level of the respondent.

#### *Country, gender and age*

The survey was distributed to 587 persons and completed by 170 volunteers from the following countries:

- Egypt (79 respondents)
- Jordan (34 respondents)
- Denmark (25 respondents)
- Tunisia (12 respondents)
- Morocco (10 respondents)



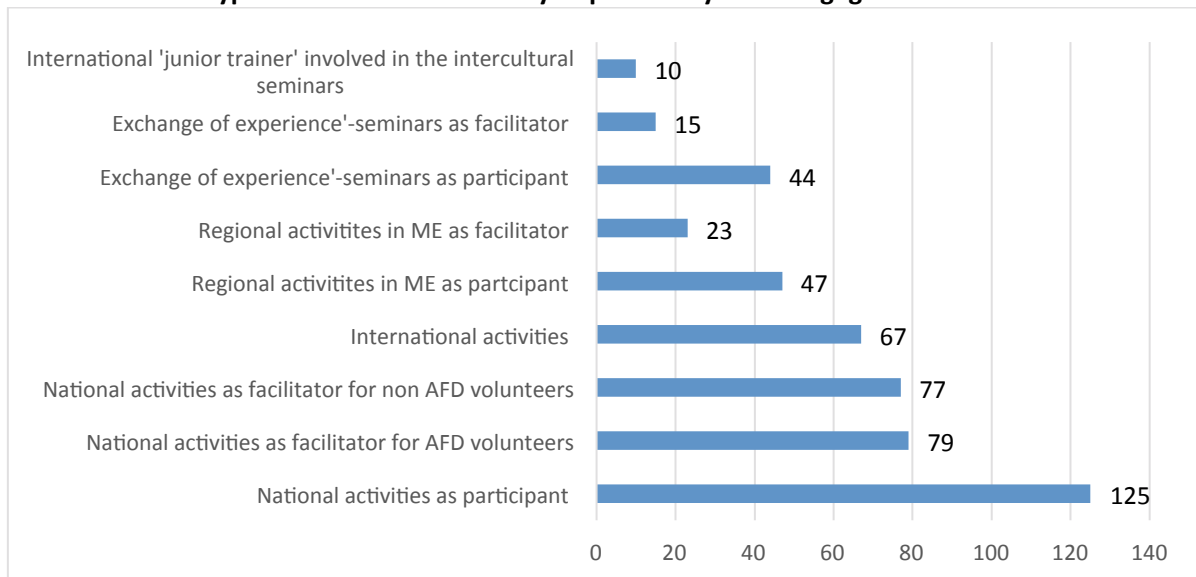
- Lebanon (8 respondents)
- Palestine (2 respondents)

There is a fairly equal distribution between men and women: 90 respondents are male and 80 are female. Most of the respondents are in their twenties. The youngest respondent is aged 17 and the oldest is aged 40. 97 respondents are aged 20-25 and 56 respondents are aged 26-30. 14 respondents are aged 31-40 and 3 respondents are aged 17-19.

#### *Participation in the AFD programme*

In order to get an impression of the profiles of the respondents, they were asked which activities of the AFD they have previously been involved in, and which they are currently involved in. Model 1 shows that most respondents have previously been engaged in national activities, while 67 respondents (40 pct.) have been involved in international activities such as seminars and workshops.

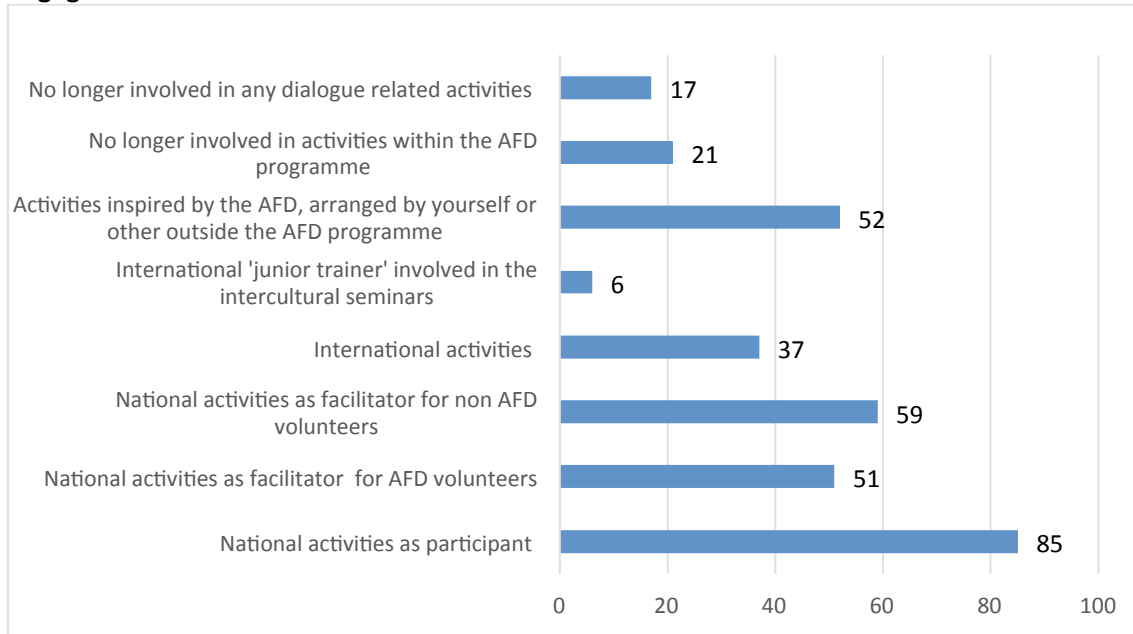
#### **Model 1. Which type of AFD activities have you previously been engaged in?**



Model 2 shows that half of the respondents (85 persons) are currently engaged in national activities as participants, while approximately one out of three respondents are currently engaged as facilitators of national activities. 37 respondents are currently engaged in international activities such as seminars and workshops.

21 respondents are no longer involved in activities within the AFD programme, while 17 respondents are no longer involved in any dialogue related activities. 52 respondents are currently engaged in "Activities inspired by the AFD, arranged by yourself or other outside the AFD programme".

**Model 2. Which type of AFD activities and/or activities inspired by the AFD are you currently engaged in?**



## 1.6. Structure of the Report

This report falls in 5 chapters:

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

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

Chapter 3 provides the mapping of programme related activities within the 'controlled' sphere as well as in the periphery of the AFD programme. It sheds light on *where* and *how* dialogue activities are implemented and on how dialogue activities are received by participants.

Chapter 4 presents a selection of seven cases illustrating best practice concerning extended impact of the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme. The cases illustrate best practice in regards to implementation, anchoring and impact.

Chapter 5 provides a best practice assessment summing up the examples of extended impact given in the cases. Through describing various forms of impact found throughout the impact study we identify elements of influence regarding the extended impact of the AFD programme.

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## CHAPTER 2

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This extended impact study shows that the Ambassadors for Dialogue (AFD) programme indeed has an impact on the world, which stretches beyond the spheres of control' of the programme. Thus many ambassadors implement dialogue activities independently of the AFD, and participants and collaborators receive these activities positively and regard them as having a very positive impact on the settings, where they are carried out.

#### **Mapping of Programme Related Activities**

The extended impact study of the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme includes a mapping based on data collected by DUF, EYF and the WE Centre combined with data from a survey conducted amongst 170 ambassadors for dialogue in the autumn of 2016.

The mapping shows a wide extent of dialogue activities within as well as outside the framework of AFD. Data collected by the project holders shows that there have been more than 18.000 participants in dialogue activities conducted *within* the AFD from 2009-2015.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, data from the survey shows that 75 pct. of the responding ambassadors have conducted dialogue activities *outside* the framework of AFD. This indicates that the reach of the AFD is much greater than the project holders' registration lists document. It is difficult to give an exact extent of the reach of activities as not all ambassadors for dialogue have participated in the survey data must be considered with some reservation. But data from the survey indicates that approximately 3.000 activities with a total of 30-40.000 participants have been conducted in the periphery of AFD. Many of these activities have been targeted at young participants, mainly in youth-organisations, projects and initiatives and in educational institutions. The overall impression of the ambassadors is that the dialogue activities are 'well' or 'very well' received by participants, and that – to the extent of their knowledge of the impact of the activities in the time following – dialogue activities have a positive impact on aspects such as mutual understanding, social relations and internal cooperation.

#### **Impact of the AFD programme**

The study shows that the approach of the Ambassadors for Dialogue has a unique ability to engage participants and give them an incentive to apply AFD methods and exercises in their schools, organisations and workplaces as well as to their personal and professional relationships. The seven best practise cases of the study illustrate how dialogue activities have resulted in better learning environment at schools, a strengthening of organisational culture and corporation between groups with different social and political backgrounds, and in this way, step by step and person by person adds to a culture of dialogue in Jordan and Egypt. One of the interviewees of the study phrases it this way:

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<sup>3</sup> Data from 2016 is not included in the study

*“We are in a very early state when it comes to spreading the culture of dialogue. However I think that this new wave of kids they have worked with lately are a true treasure because they are spreading the culture of dialogue spontaneously without even taking any initiative”*

This also illustrates that the importance of the programme is related to the context in which ambassadors for dialogue are working – in this study meaning Egypt and Jordan. Dialogue activities are described as powerful and important by interviewees, because they are implemented in countries, which – in the eyes of the interviewees – are not characterised by a strong culture of dialogue. The exercises and dialogical approach of the AFD offers a new way of communicating about sensitive topics, of enhancing understanding and tolerance between different groups, and addressing target groups in disadvantaged urban areas or areas characterised by conservative values. Furthermore interviewees describe dialogue and the AFD approach as an important way of addressing and offering an alternative understanding of the world to young people living in countries with a difficult political situation and a fear of religious radicalisation etc.

Looking across the cases, more specifically, AFD activities can create a positive change on the setting by:

- **strengthening of the internal corporation** between youth in different settings, where they meet. Not only does this diminish the conflict level of the participants and thus has an internal effect. It can also help creating tangible results because an organisation less occupied by internal conflicts is more likely to create external results and to effect on surroundings such as the political setting, in which it is working
- **supporting a dialogical culture** by teaching workshop participants to express their own opinions and be confident doing this, as well as listening to and respecting other peoples perspectives
- **strengthening of the organisational culture** of NGO’s, networks etc. through the exercises and approach of the AFD
- adding to an **improved leaning environment at schools**, where teachers see a positive effect of a more dialogical approach to teaching, where dialogue activities are described as creating less conflicts between the students, and a better relationship between teachers and students, because the students feel they are heard and thus act in a smoother way towards teachers and peers
- making it possible to **implement NGO-activities in communities characterised by conflicts or by conservative values**
- introducing a way of **addressing sensitive topics** such as abortion and early marriage, religion or the Egyptian revolution. By addressing these subjects through dialogue exercises, the participants feel it easier and less dangerous to talk about – and even feel that they are offered a new vocabulary when addressing these issues

### Cases of extended impact

Seven cases have been selected to qualitatively illustrate best practice concerning extended impact of the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme. The cases represent different aspects of best practise in regards to implementation, anchoring and impact on local communities, educational institutions, organisations and initiatives in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark. Case by case, the findings of the study are:

- **Case #1 – Rwaad, Egypt:** Rwaad is an NGO working on development of a disadvantaged urban area of Cairo. Within the Rwaad framework a series of dialogue activities have been implemented as part of programme, where young people commit themselves to voluntary work in return for receiving educational scholarships and workshops. In Rwaad, dialogue is experienced to have allowed the NGO to work in the disadvantaged urban area. Furthermore, Rwaad participants has used the dialogical approach as a tool in order to take a part in solving some of the local conflicts arising in the area, and they have applied dialogical methods to their volunteer work and in new initiatives inspired by AFD workshops.
- **Case #2 – Selmya Movement, Egypt:** Selmya Movement is an umbrella style network with the aim of coordinating between initiatives and projects within Egyptian civil society. The movement is promoting ‘a culture of peace’ and transparency and dialogue activities have been implemented in order to contribute to conflicts solution. Selmya and AFD have had a close corporation since the founding of Selmya in 2012. AFD has had a positive impact on Selmya as reliable, well prepared and inspiring facilitators of Selmya workshops, and thereby e.g. inspiring activists to engage in Selmya, who have become leading figures of the organisation. Furthermore the AFD dialogue exercises have been important in strengthening the culture of dialogue inside the Selmya network.
- **Case #3 – National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, Egypt:** The National Council has two programmes for young people, where a dialogue component has been implemented: The programme for the Health of Teenagers, and the Egyptian Child Forum. In both programmes dialogue activities have been used with the aim of strengthening internal corporation and external communication to peers and official representatives. AFD inspired dialogue activities have been implemented as in the capacity building of the young participants, and have strengthened the understanding between participants of different backgrounds and thereby reduced conflicts between participants. Furthermore dialogue activities have helped participants expressing their opinions and given them a stronger fundament to influence government officials and decision makers.
- **Case #4 – With dialogue we can rise up and progress, Jordan:** This initiative is inspired by AFD approach and methods and using these when implementing dialogue in schools and universities and in the Princess Basma Centre in Southern Jordan. The initiative has inspired several other initiatives based in the Princess Basma Centre, e.g. a programme for mothers about raising children. The dialogical approach has also inspired the restructuring of a programme for children dropping out of school, and has allowed for a new – and successful – way of approaching parents and strengthening the dialogue and

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understanding between parents and children, and adding to prevention and solution of conflicts between generations.

- **Case #5 – Nazal School, Jordan:** Nazal School is a girls' school located in an area inhabited by Palestinian refugees in eastern Amman. Ambassadors for Dialogue have implemented several workshops at the school with the aim of addressing challenges such as early marriage and poverty. Teachers and students feel that dialogue workshops gave them a new way of addressing these sensitive subjects. Dialogue activities have furthermore been experienced to have a positive influence on the learning environment, because the teachers use the exercises to make the students listen to each other, and because participations in the workshop has a strong effect on some of the more influential students.
- **Case #6 – All Jordanian Youth Commission, Tafileh, Jordan:** The Youth Commission is responsible for carrying out governmental development projects for the Jordanian youth in Tafileh. Within this framework a number of dialogue activities have been implemented, i.e. training youth to implement dialogue in their schools. The dialogue activities are seen to have made a positive change at schools by resulting in a calmer attitude of the students and a more respectful approach to their teacher. The focus on dialogue is being institutionalised by training selected students as 'mini-ambassadors for dialogue' and by teachers implementing dialogue principles in their classes.
- **Case #7 – Øregård Gymnasium, Denmark:** Øregård Gymnasium is a public high school in Hellerup, Denmark, which has had a close cooperation with the AFD through a 4-year period. At Øregård high school the main aim of implementing dialogue workshops has been to increase the intercultural understanding of the students through dialogue with the international Ambassadors for Dialogue. The students see a positive effect of the meeting with Jordanian and Egyptian ambassadors, because of the opportunity to ask questions and to be surprised by the opinions of the ambassadors. The teachers see the dialogue activities as adding to the general or democratic education of the students as well as to their understanding of the more theoretical approach to subjects such as religion, integration and the Middle East as discussed in class.



Ambassadors for Dialogue at International Peace Day, Alexandria, Selmya Movement

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. MAPPING OF PROGRAMME RELATED ACTIVITIES

Chapter 3 provides the mapping of programme related activities within the ‘controlled’ sphere as well as in the periphery of the AFD programme. It sheds light on where and how dialogue activities are implemented and on how dialogue activities are received by participants.

#### 3.1. Activities within and in the Periphery of the AFD programme - Extent and Reach

DUF, EYF and the WE Centre continuously collect data on activities within the ‘controlled’ spheres of the AFD programme. When this data is supplemented with the data collected in the survey conducted as part of the extended impact study, we are provided with an idea of the total amount of activities conducted as a result of the AFD programme.

Data provided by DUF shows that national dialogue activities have reached a total of 11.226 participants from 2009-2015, and that the dialogue van has reached 1.050 participants during its tour in Jordan in 2015. Furthermore, activities conducted by the international team of AFD have involved 4.511 participants from 2010-2015. Thus, according to these records a total number of 18.429 participants have been involved in AFD activities from the beginning in 2009 up to the end of 2015. The data does not provide numbers from 2016.

The data also shows that the main part of national activities of AFD, have been conducted in Jordan (6.001 participant) and Egypt (5.212 participants). In Denmark a smaller number, 1060 participants, have been involved in national activities, which is not surprising since Denmark has no national team within the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme.

Furthermore, the data gathered by DUF shows that the number of participants reached by the activities has continued to grow during the project period. Thus a total of 1.450 participants were reached at the beginning of the AFD programme in 2009-2010, while a total 5.088 people participated in 2015, this number includes the participants in dialogue van-activities in Jordan.

**Table 1. AFD participants 2009 – 2015**

Year	National				Intercultural				Regional	TOTAL
	Jordan	Egypt	Denmark	Total	Jordan	Egypt	Denmark	Total		
2009 - 2010	483	483	484	1.450						<b>1.450</b>
2010 - 2011	623	597	647	1.867	169	230	504	903	0	<b>2.770</b>
2012 + 2013	1.192	1.964	258	3.414	561	703	802	2.066	0	<b>5.480</b>
2014 + 2015	3.136	2.654	155	5.945	467	521	554	1.542	192	<b>7.679</b>
Dialogue van*	1.050			1.050						<b>1.050</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.001</b>	<b>5.215</b>	<b>1.060</b>	<b>11.226</b>	<b>1.197</b>	<b>1.454</b>	<b>1.860</b>	<b>4.511</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>18.429</b>

\* Dialogue van, Jordan



### Activities in the periphery of the AFD-programme

The mapping of the dialogue activities conducted in the periphery of the AFD is not as precise as the data from DUF. This is due to the fact that not all ambassadors have participated in the survey, and that most dialogue workshops are conducted by more than one ambassador. This means that the number of activities in the survey is probably artificially high, because every workshop might have been registered by more than one respondent. Furthermore, the ambassadors have been asked to answer questions about their activities from they became part of the programme, which for some means seven years ago in 2009, which increases the chance of inaccuracy in the numbers reported by the respondents. Therefore, survey data must be considered with some reservation.

This taken into account, survey data shows that a large part of the respondents have carried out activities outside the AFD programme. As shown in table 2, only 34 of the 170 respondents say that they have *not* facilitated activities outside the AFD programme. This means that approximately 75 pct. of respondents have implemented dialogue activities outside the AFD framework.

**Table 2: Respondents who have facilitated dialogue activities (dialogue workshops, seminars, trainings etc.) outside the framework of the AFD programme**

	Denmark	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Total
<b>Youth organisations/initiatives/projects</b>	20	51	21	3	5	1	11	<b>112</b>
<b>Non-youth organisations/initiatives/projects</b>	7	20	10	1	0	1	6	<b>45</b>
<b>Workplace/professional settings</b>	11	21	9	0	1	2	2	<b>46</b>
<b>Educational institutions</b>	9	27	15	3	2	0	7	<b>63</b>
<b>Urban/rural community based initiatives</b>	5	12	12	0	2	1	0	<b>32</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
<b>I have not facilitated dialogue activities outside AFD</b>	4	17	7	3	3	0	0	<b>34</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	2	1	0	2	0	1	<b>8</b>

Table 2 also shows that most of the respondents have implemented dialogue workshops in youth organisations.

Survey data on extent and reach of dialogue activities in the periphery of the programme repeats the pattern from DUF data where most activities have been carried out in Egypt and Jordan.

According to the survey data a very large number of activities have been carried out in the periphery of the AFD, and a high number of participants have been reached through these activities. The ambassadors who have facilitated activities in youth organisations estimate that they have carried out an average of 14 activities with an average of 10 participants. In for example educational institutions, the respondents have facilitated an average of 10 activities

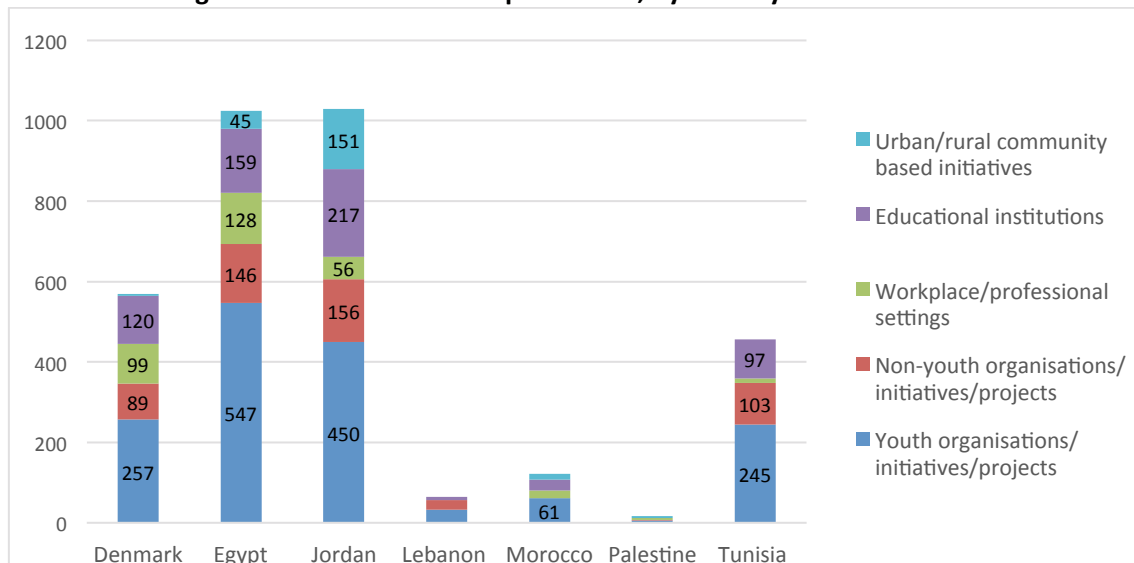
each, with an average of 13 participants. This pattern is approximately the same in the other settings. Thus, survey data indicate a total of approximately 3.000 activities with a total of 30-40.000 participants.

### 3.2. Settings and Character of Activities

Survey data shows that half of all activities implemented in the periphery of AFD, are carried out in youth organisations, initiatives or projects (49 pct.). 19 pct. of activities are implemented in educational institutions, 16 pct. in non-youth organisations, initiatives or projects, 10 pct. in workplace or professional setting and 7 pct. in community based initiatives.

Model 3 illustrates the pattern of settings of the activities in each country. The model shows that in Egypt, more than half of activities (547 dialogue activities or 53 pct.) are carried out in youth organisations and 13 pct. (128 dialogue activities) are carried out in workplaces or professional settings, whereas in Jordan a bit more of activities are distributed between community based initiatives and educational institutions, and only a small number (56 activities or 5 pct.) are implemented in workplace or professional settings.

**Model 3. Settings where activities are implemented, by country**



In the AFD programme, there are different ways of working with dialogue activities. And three overall categories are often used to describe different form of dialogue activities:

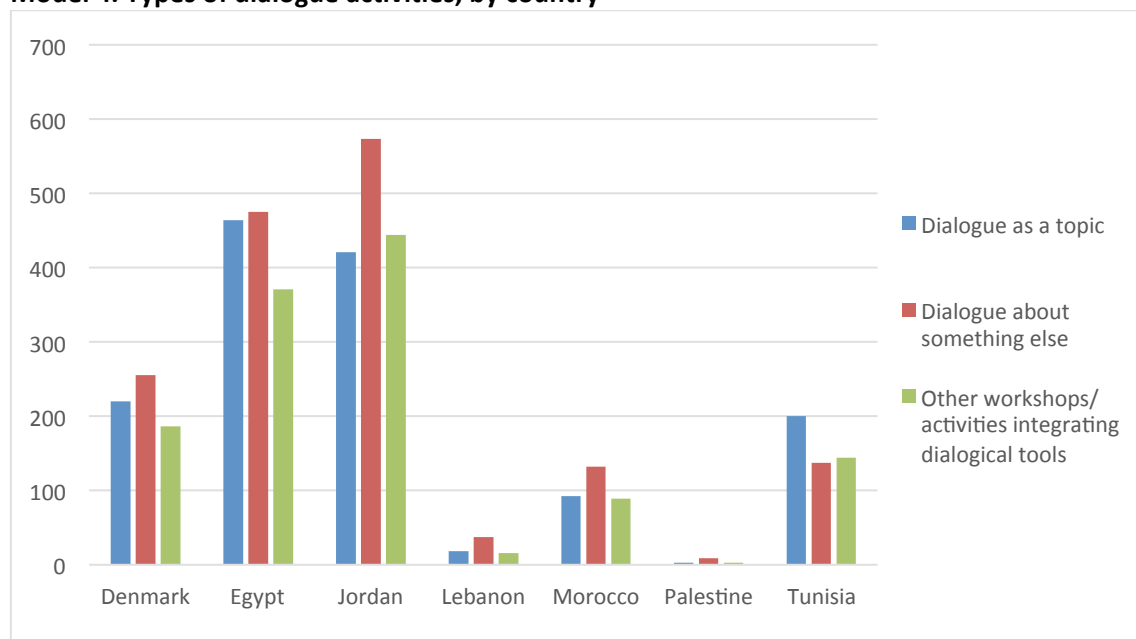
- 1) Dialogue workshop/activity about dialogue as topic (e.g. a method, an approach, an idea)
- 2) Dialogue workshop/activity with dialogue about something else (e.g. aiming to enhance mutual understanding and/or improve relations and cooperation)
- 3) Other workshop/activity integrating dialogical tools/exercises etc.

It is not always easy to distinguish between the three categories, and one activity or workshop can include elements of all three categories. We have asked participants to distinguish

between the three categories, in order to get an idea of how the AFD approach is implemented outside the official framework of the programme.

Survey data shows a fairly equal distribution between the three different types of activities, slightly weighted in favour of dialogue workshops or activities with 'dialogue about something else', as shown in model 4.

**Model 4. Types of dialogue activities, by country**



Data also shows that the distribution between the three categories of activities is the same across different settings.

### 3.3. How Participants Receive the Activities

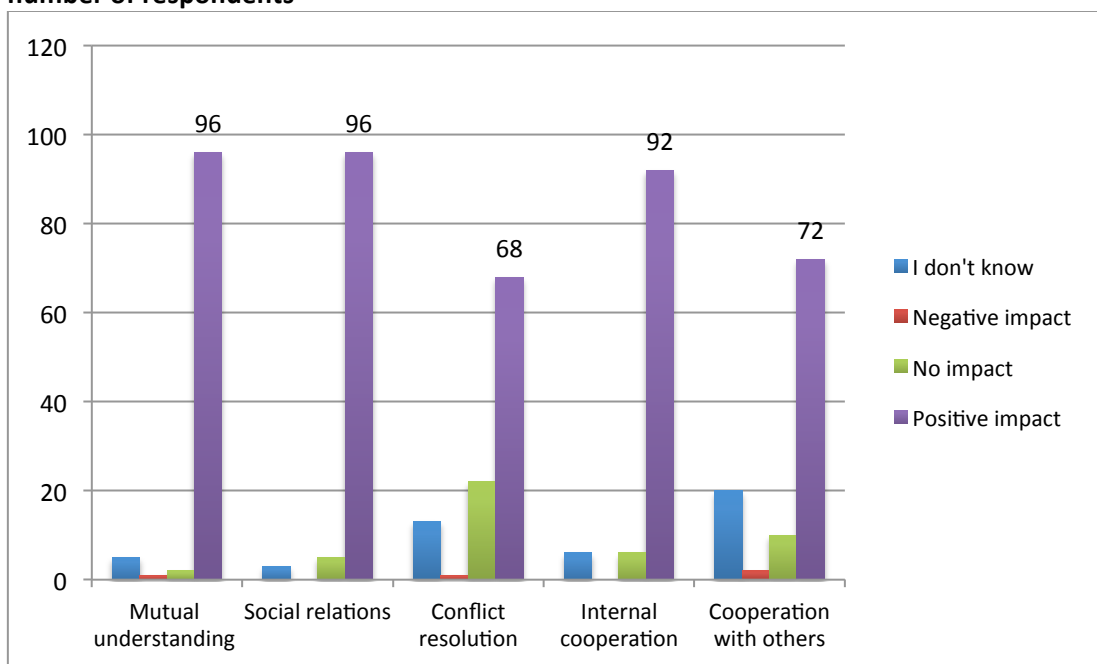
The respondents have been asked about their overall experience of how participants react to and receive the dialogue activities. Survey data shows that the experience of ambassadors is that dialogue activities receive a very warm welcome by the participants. Thus, more than 90 pct. of the respondents think that the dialogue activities they have facilitated were received "well" or "very well".<sup>4</sup> We find the highest number in relation to non-youth organisations, initiatives or projects, where 98 pct. of the respondents think that the activities they facilitated were received well or very well.

The survey thus shows that the overall experience of the ambassadors for dialogue is that participants in the dialogue activities are very positive towards the approach and methods of the AFD. But do the participants benefit from the activities in the long term? And does the dialogue activity affect the setting in the time following the activity?

<sup>4</sup> The question was: "How were the dialogue activities received in general?"

Respondents have been asked to consider the impact of the activity related to factors such as 'mutual understanding and respect', 'social relations', 'conflict resolution', 'internal cooperation' and 'cooperation with others'. Model 3 illustrates respondents' assessment of the impact in the time following the dialogue activity. The overall impression of the respondents is that dialogue activities have a very positive impact on youth organisations, initiatives or projects, especially when it comes to mutual understanding, social relations and internal cooperation. The picture is approximately the same across settings.

**Model 5. Impact of dialogue activities on youth organisations, initiatives or projects, by number of respondents**



## CHAPTER 4

### 4. CASES OF EXTENDED IMPACT

This chapter presents a selection of seven cases illustrating best practice concerning the extended impact of the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme. These cases are to qualitatively illustrate best practice in regards to implementation, anchoring and impact on local communities, educational institutions, organisations and initiatives in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark.

The cases illustrate how dialogue activities can add to the development of a culture, where young people feel empowered and where dialogue is experienced to help solve problems, prevent conflicts in families, at schools or at a more fundamental societal level. Furthermore the approach of the AFD can help strengthening an organisational setting by inspiring participants and by offering a strong identity and a dedicated culture of volunteers.

The cases have been selected by DUF, EYF and WE Centre and include three cases in Egypt, three cases in Jordan and one in Denmark. The cases have been selected, as they are believed to be examples of best practice in the respective countries. Together the cases exemplify extended impact of AFD in NGO's (#1 in Egypt), networks (#2 in Egypt), governmental programmes and institutions (#3 in Egypt, #4 in Jordan and #6 in Jordan) and educational institutions (#5 in Jordan and #7 in Denmark).

Each case includes a minimum of three levels of persons; the ambassador for dialogue responsible for implementing dialogue activities in the specific setting, a representative of management of the setting and participants of the activities where dialogue has been implemented. The role of the ambassador and the AFD varies in the seven cases.

The cases are all described following the same structure; the nature and extent of the project, the initiative or setting of the case, the aim of implementing dialogue, the effect of implementing dialogue on a participant level as well as at an organisational level.

#### 4.1. Case #1 – Rwaad, Egypt

Interviewees for case #1:

- Ahmed El Nashar (22 years old), project coordinator at AFD
- Abdelaziz Youssuf (25 years old), project coordinator at Rwaad
- 8 participants of Rwaad (19-23 years old), students and engaged with the organisation for 1-3 years

Rwaad is an NGO working with the development – economic empowerment, education etc. - of a disadvantaged urban area of Cairo. It offers educational scholarships and workshops on

various topics to youth from the local area and the surrounding communities. In return, Rwaad participants are to commit themselves to 8 hours of engagement per week; four of these are allocated to attending workshops and four of them to working with the younger people and children of the local area. Rwaad also runs a project for local children, providing a 'safe space' for expression, capacity building and skill development. The surrounding community therefore primarily sees Rwaad as a 'safe space' where youth and children are kept off the streets and away from the trouble this might lead to.

Rwaad accepts two waves of participants a year, each consisting of 25-30 young people. Currently Rwaad has 86 active volunteers aged 20-25. Volunteers are chosen based on their need for scholarship, motivation for education and a balanced composition of gender and educational goals. The scholarships provided either cover university fees, English or Italian courses or alternatively vocational training. By being part of Rwaad the participants furthermore commit to succeeding in their educational programme.

#### **Aims of implementing dialogue at Rwaad**

Abdelaziz, who coordinates the activities and training of Rwaad, knows about AFD through the Selmya Movement. Both Rwaad and AFD are part of the Selmya network (see case #2).

The involvement of AFD began with one workshop facilitated by Ahmed. Hereafter Rwaad asked for more workshops in order to build the capacity of their volunteers, and have them trained as workshop facilitators. According to Ahmed, Rwaad wanted to implement the dialogical element in order to improve the way participants work together, as well as utilize it in the work done within the community. He finds this particularly important since the area in which Rwaad works is rather 'closed' and difficult to access.

Abdelaziz explains the aims of implementing dialogue in Rwaad as multiple. Firstly, the revolution made many young people realise the need and importance of dialogue skills. He also saw this need among the youth of Rwaad and wanted to offer them training in dialogical values: *"AFD offers a bunch of tools, dialogue tools, that actually stimulates the curiosity of the young people and make them ask questions on how to apply it on the grounds, in terms of initiatives."* Secondly, he finds that the values of dialogue is an important skill for young people at university age, in order to prepare them for the labour market and give them better job opportunities. Lastly, AFD tools *"enable young people from different political views and backgrounds to share their opinions in a safe manner, and give them the opportunity to get to know each other in a meaningful way."*

The AFD facilitate both shorter one-day dialogue workshops and longer three-day TOF (training of facilitators) workshops for Rwaad volunteers. Both kinds of workshops usually have 20-25 participants. The TOF workshop consists of activities regarding *"respecting and putting your self in other persons' shoes"*, dialogue tools, values, facilitation tools and exercises focusing on facilitation. This is intended to equip the volunteers for being workshop facilitators themselves. The AFD check up on the needs of Rwaad regularly and see the demand for more workshops as an indicator that Rwaad volunteers are in fact using the dialogical tools.

### Effect on setting

Dialogue components are implemented into all activities of Rwaad in order to improve acceptance of the NGO's work in the urban area of their work. In Ahmad's words:

*"They [Rwaad] used it [dialogue] to customise the community with them being existing in the slum area. It is a very closed area, so they were not really accepted to work in the area at the beginning, but they used the dialogue workshop to talk to them in the community and get accepted by them. Also when they do awareness sessions or some sort of capacity building in the programme in the area they use the tools of dialogue within the sessions, no matter the subject of the session."*

Besides from this, dialogue is used by Rwaad and its volunteers in their work on "finding solutions to local problems." Participants underline that dialogue is especially important in the urban area of which Rwaad works, since they experience many issues and conflicts among the inhabitants. They have implemented the dialogical tools into their volunteer activities, and they have "invented" new activities build on dialogue, in order to affect the setting they are working in. Some of them explain:

*"I started an initiative because a lot of people in my street were having disputes and arguments, an I started an initiative on establishing dialogue between the conflicting parties in my street"*

*"I attended the workshop because I really like the name of the programme, Ambassadors for Dialogue, and I think that it is a very needed skill especially in [name of area] because people are very violent and they disagree about anything. I really loved the workshop, it was very useful for me and I think it should get out of the small session or rooms of the NGO, it could be spread within the streets for more people"*

Both Abdelaziz and the participants themselves say that the participants of Rwaad use the dialogical tools, the interactive method and the Dialogue Handbook when conducting workshops within Rwaad. Furthermore some volunteers have established a new initiative that intends to spread the values of dialogue to persons outside of Rwaad. A participant explains how she has been able to pass on what she has learned to the children's programme that she volunteers in. Also, she asked the AFD to conduct a session for the children directly. Another participant has been able to implement the exercises into the all-women's electricity class she is teaching. A third participant gives an example of how they are using the dialogical attitude in a more subtle way, e.g. when dealing with members of her church, appointing a leader etc.

In this way, interviewees describe dialogue as a very useful tool in their activities in and beyond Rwaad, and they feel that it is essential for them to achieve the goals of the different initiatives. However, both Abdelaziz and the participants continually find it challenging to work in the urban area, and implementing the dialogical tools into their everyday life. Egyptian society has simply not embraced these values. This means that while volunteers might let others finish when speaking, others will not respond with the same behaviour:

*"For me it is frustrating, when I try to listen to people on the street and let them finish, but then they don't give me the same chance. I don't know how to enforce this, the values that I have learned. I don't want to generalize, but I think that the Egyptian*

*society does not embrace those values and it is hard for me to impose it or teach them how to do it. Sometimes I wait for someone until he finishes, but the other person does not do the same for me, so that is very frustrating for me. It is also very frustrating that I will pick opinions at face value on the street or in the society and they have ready-made labels. So when you really express your opinion, you are labelled as either you are a Muslim brotherhood or you support the regime, so you are labelled with a radical stigma. So it is very hard to express your opinion without getting labelled."*

Abdelaziz advises the AFD to work on simplifying the dialogue tools, in order to make them easier to use in the volunteers' homes and workplaces.

### **Effect on participant level**

Ahmed finds the Rwaad participants of AFD workshops very perceptive and interactive. The AFD do workshops for many types of participants, and contrary to what one might think, Ahmed finds the youth of the urban disadvantaged area much easier to work with than e.g. university students. The reason behind this is that NGO's are more accustomed to the training culture while students are more accustomed to being lectured.

The participants of Rwaad have all heard about Rwaad through the local community, and have initially joined due to interests in theatre, music, football etc. They now study various subjects and volunteer at Rwaad with e.g. tutoring at a children's programme, teaching electricity classes and training a sports programme. Simultaneously they feel they have enhanced their skills in their areas of interest through attending 'soft skills workshops'; workshops on communication, dialogue and leadership skills. Apart from the workshops given by 'experts', Rwaad provides the opportunity for peer-to-peer workshops on topics of interest. Some volunteers have only participated in the short AFD workshop, while others have participated in the TOF too.

The participants find the AFD workshops useful on both personal and volunteer level. According to the participants the workshops given by AFD focused mainly on the culture and principles of dialogue, how to accept the other, and how to conduct and facilitate dialogue. While some participants had some thoughts about dialogue prior to the workshop, most participants describe, how they have gained a much deeper understanding of the concept of dialogue and the difference between *"argument, debate and dialogue"*. That the purpose of dialogue is not *"to convince him, and if he is not convinced you would insult him, and telling him that he is just stupid. ... It is okay to let someone have a different opinion and just end the dialogue with this."* They particularly mention the talking stick and the line game as interesting and useful exercises that teach them to be good listeners. Most participants claim that dialogue has become an integrated part of their behaviour; *"an interactive process that we live in every day"*.

Abdelaziz particularly sees the impact on the wording that the volunteers use between them. Hence, you will often hear them say: *"Please listen to me"* or *"Let's have a dialogue about this"*.



### Effect on an organisational level

Abdelaziz and the participants agree that the dialogical component has made it easier for the Rwaad volunteers, who come from very different backgrounds, to work together:

*“Ambassadors for Dialogue have helped a lot of the actual volunteers of Rwaad, because (...) they are very diverse and they come from different backgrounds, so I can see the value of dialogue within them organising themselves and acting on activities and important things.”*

As the dialogical training has primarily been given to volunteers and not the staff of Rwaad, the effect can primarily be seen on the young people and their implementation of projects. However, some members of staff have participated in workshops together with the volunteers, which Abdelaziz believes has had a small impact on the way they deal with each other.

## 4.2. Case #2 – Selmya Movement, Egypt.

Interviewees for case #2:

- Radwa Ibrahim (24 years old), international ambassador since 2012, member of the national team and academic advisor at the American University
- Khalil El Masr (28 years old), president of the Selmya Movement
- 2 participants of Selmya Movement, Amr (21 years old) and Ashour (22 years old), members of the AFD national team in Alexandria

Based on founder Khalil’s experience of a growing need for coordination of initiatives and projects within the Egyptian civil society, Selmya Movement was founded as an umbrella style network in June 2012. The movement promotes ‘a culture of peace’ and transparency and currently includes more than 60 member organisations. These have been selected from a mass of applicants.

Selmya network began as a Facebook group for contacts made during the revolution as well as workshop participants. The movement continues to use social media as a primary platform for its work. Selmya began facilitating two-three day workshops and camps on the culture of peace, conflict resolution, diversity management and dialogue and has continued to experience large interest in these. Since Khalil, who was facilitating the workshops, has gone back to his IT career, various institutes have taken over the facilitation of workshops, and this includes the AFD. Workshops usually have 20 participants and are facilitated in different settings within Cairo, Alexandria and other governorates of Egypt; a cultural centre, university festivals, and a mosque.

### Aims of implementing dialogue at Selmya Movement

In 2011, prior to the official formation of Selmya, Khalil participated in an AFD workshop facilitated by the international team. Hence, although the focus was primarily on non-violent

communication, the AFD activities were part of Selmya's workshops from the beginning. Furthermore AFD helped invite participants for the very first Selmya workshop. More actively the AFD and the Egyptian Youth Federation has been part of Selmya Movement since its second workshop, Sept 2012, at which Radwa suggested that an AFD ambassador should be co-facilitating with Khalil. In Oct 2012 she became in charge of the dialogue element of the workshops, and Radwa alongside other AFD ambassadors, has since facilitated many workshops and camps, implementing AFD components and activities. She explains how she saw a potential for adding theories and activities – i.e. active listening and awareness of ones own judgements - founded in the AFD to Selmya, in order to contribute to conflicts solution.

Hence the AFD-inspired dialogue component has been part of Selmya since its inception and the two projects continue to be intertwined and overlapping, both in terms of content and volunteers/members. In this sense Khalil also sees the AFD as a founding element of Selmya.

### **Effect on setting**

According to Khalil, AFD has had a positive effect on Selmya as a setting in different ways.

First of all, as mentioned above, the AFD approach was part of Selmya's workshops from the beginning, because Khalid in 2011 – and hence before Selmya was founded – participated in and was inspired by an AFD workshop. This approach was strengthened by the time Radwa begun facilitating workshops together with Khalil, and applied the dialogue exercises and approach of AFD.

Besides from this very specific effect on Selmya, the approach of the AFD has also affected Selmya with its unique dedication and the strong identity of the ambassadors, which Khalil finds characteristic of the AFD. According to Khalil the ambassadors for dialogue are distinguished from other volunteers by their reliability, strong identity and sense of belonging to the AFD programme:

*"I guess what is really unique about ambassadors is reliability. They are reliable. Because if I'm working with any other facilitator in any other structure, they are coming as volunteers. Here it's volunteers, with ambassadors it's different. When you have a strong identity like ambassadors, I feel that they have this identity and they feel that they belong to ambassadors for dialogue. On the contrary with other initiatives where they have been volunteering with this initiative or they took training with this initiative. So here its, whenever we have the AFD I can always rely on them. I know that they are there; maybe also because there is someone who is always coordinating the participation and they make sure that they are there. I don't know how it's working internally, but I know that they will be reliable, they will show up, they will be there. You know we need to, if we are doing a workshop in this place, we need to be there. And sometimes we have challenges like that. Sometimes we cancel things and we apologize. Hopefully all the time its before, not a no-show at the day. Before that sometimes people apologize for different reasons. Here you will find people who might replace others (...) they will be there. And also what I see from, when I follow up with any of the photos that are posted [on social media] by any of our members, they are all, most of them are friends. I can see that they are doing a lot when it comes to search the community and the bonding. So it was about the retreats that they are doing, the camps, the working*

*camps even, or as national team or the international team comes. So all of these activities, on-going activities are contributing to more strength and more resilience for AFD as an organization or initiative and as ambassadors.”*

He sees ambassadors as reliable and as having a strong identity, but also as remarkably well prepared:

*“One of the things that I remember now is the hat. Like the first workshop that she [Radwa] did was, I’m not really good at preparation I like go in the workshops with more of improvising. I go with the flow and I don’t really have, yeah I know that I need to cover these things, but if this first activity went like more of the time I will cut from the second one. And sometimes I don’t prepare the tools, so I do it at the time and I know about all the tools and this can be now organised in five minutes in a break between activities or something like that. But with Radwa I found that all the structure and the tools that she is coming with is planned. And also when she did it, it was the first time even for me to see, we didn’t have this activity when I did the workshop with Maseriati. Something that is related to the hat and how we have different hats and with each hat we can talk with different style, different perspectives.”*

Furthermore, according to Khalil the exercises of AFD have a strong effect on the participants, and are very inspiring to the participants. When workshops are evaluated, the exercises of AFD are mentioned as something special, more than e.g. a strong personality of the ambassadors. They always evaluate activities in the end of the day:

*“At the end evaluation of the day we just ask »maybe something has stuck with you or that you got out of it?« Most of the people will point to the, what they call ‘mind switch’ or ‘brain switch’. This is when we invite people to stand in a position and invite them to think or put them selves into the shoes of the others. And this has always been one of the things that participants really appreciate. And a thing that we have found challenging, but it has been inspiring to do that at the end of the day.”*

In Khalil’s opinion, actually the dialogue activities implemented by Radwa in the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop of Selmya in October 2012 inspired a bigger group of participants to engage in Selmya, whom have for a longer period of time been leading members of the organization:

*“I can see that a lot of the people who have been to the third workshop they were more engaged in Selmya than before. So they must have come up with a more, what is the word, a more unique experience. Until now the people who have really developed Selmya, they were the participants in the third workshop.”*

The activists of Selmya and its member organizations are often characterised by being very engaged and dedicated to their political opinions etc. For this reason some subjects can be difficult to discuss within Selmya, and subjects like religion and politics are sometimes avoided. However, they have experienced that even the dialogue exercises can be difficult, but they can also result in actually creating a dialogue between some of the members:

*“At the last camp we had a situation where one of the participants didn’t want to do the brain switch. It was about the revolution and she was really into the revolution and we*

*invited her to see another perspective and she had big resistance. But what was really inspiring is that the second day she came and she apologised and she felt like, »I don't know why I acted like that.« And she said that she is resisting it and she understands why but she cannot do it. She was very emotional after.”*

According to Khalil the principals of a dialogical culture are not only important when it comes to Selmya as an organisation. Because of the political situation in Egypt, he sees two trends, which call for the introduction of a culture based on dialogue. First of all, he sees a tendency towards people not listening to each other. This becomes apparent when one of the AFD exercises is introduced, the talking stick:

*“The game with the stick we choose that we are repeating, and we are. It has been hilarious to see the people who are sitting with the talking stick and they are not able to repeat what has been shared, because they had been preparing their own answer, their own argument. This is very challenging. And sometimes it's hard even to make the one saying it without helping to it.”*

These examples illustrate that AFD exercises are very helpful in strengthening a culture of dialogue within Selmya as an organisation. But also on a more fundamental level, Khalid sees a need for strengthening the dialogical culture in Egypt. He has seen a lot of political disillusion arising since the revolution, people have stopped listening to each other, and they have lost faith in the system and in political parties and activities:

*Khalil: “I guess a problem is in our culture (..) It's hard to find people who are really engaged in our political parties. Right now, after the revolution I resigned from the political party that I was a member in. But since four months ago I'm now again a member. And still after four years in the political party meetings, people are not listening to each other. And so now we need this culture to be more promoted. (...) I know that lots of people who are in the network, they don't believe in the political game. We are not playing with them politically, but at least we need to be there to support these political activists to apply more of these things. It will help them a lot.”*

*Interviewer: “So you were saying that a lot of people in the network are disillusioned about politics so they don't think they can change anything?”*

*Khalil: “They know that they can change but they don't believe anymore in the system and in the political parties and the political activities. Because of what has been happening in the last four years is that they lost their believe. (...)”*

*Interviewer: “Are you then trying to encourage this?”*

*Khalid: “Personally yes. On a personal basis I'm a member now of a political party and I'm (...) trying to support the members of the cultural committee. And I'm trying to help them apply these different skills.”*

Hence, Khalil himself actively uses dialogical tools to try to affect the political setting as such in Egypt.

### Effect on participant level

When considering effect on participant level, this case has two levels of 'participants': the participating organisations of the network and workshop participants of Selmya workshops.

According to both Khalil and Radwa the **workshop participants** are generally positive towards the workshops held through Selmya. Some are sceptical at first, and, as we have seen, facilitators need to be careful what topics are chosen for the dialogue exercises. Participants often respond that they feel inspired after workshops, and Selmya experiences an increased demand as the word is spreading. Khalil believes that the knowledge is implemented into participants' organisations, and he furthermore has knowledge of several new initiatives that have sprung up as a result of Selmya.

Radwa explains how being part of Selmya is of the same nature as being part of AFD: *"Sometimes I get caught up in work ... (but) whenever you are part of these affiliations you cannot get out of them. You cannot say that I'm out."* She describes Selmya as a large community with sub-communities, all relating to the concept of peace: *"Whatever we think leads to peace or lead to well-being of the community could go under Selmya"*. In this sense Radwa considers the AFD a sub-group of Selmya, while Ashour sees it as a partnership.

In terms of **AFD as a participant** in the Selmya Movement the affiliation has, according to Radwa, opened up new opportunities of partnership – for instance with Rwaad (case #1). Furthermore AFD and Selmya have largely influenced each other as organisations.

The two interviewed participants of the Selmya Movement, Amr and Ashour, are both members of the national team in Alexandria and consider themselves part of Selmya. Selmya Movement in Alexandria meet once a month, with an attendance of 30-40 persons, and arrange for instance the International Peace day.

They see Selmya as a network between initiatives that exist to save *"time, effort and money"* as the initiatives *"share the same principles"* and work together. Although AFD can be seen as a step towards peace, and hence connect to the message of peace that is the core of Selmya Movement, Selmya does not, in their eyes, have its *"own content"*, contrary to the AFD. Neither do they associate Selmya with workshops, while they both facilitate workshops as part of the AFD. Selmya is merely a network; a sum of its participating initiatives.

A personal outcome of Selmya is the friendships that the participants build; *"friendship with people with the same concept, the same ideas ... that you really believe in. ... We try to help each other in our personal life, ...in our career, in our study..."* In this process of friendship with people from other initiatives the participants also share the skills learned within the AFD. Rather than using exercises they do this in a subtle way, through everyday interactions. Another way in which the participants apply the AFD principles to Selmya – and other settings as well - is when they facilitate meetings.

Many new initiatives are starting up in Alexandria with Selmya members as the driving force – e.g. one of the participants has initiated an English language club. However, the participants cannot claim that AFD or Selmya are the main reason behind these initiatives.

### Effect on an organisational level

As dialogue is such a central element in Selmya Movement, it naturally influences the way members of the network deal with each other and the internal conflicts that inevitably arise. On an organisational level it is not so much the actual tools, such as the talking stick, that are being used. It is rather the methods of “*acknowledging what has been said – like to summarize and repeat it*”, to “*try and put themselves in other peoples shoes*”, to “*have empathy towards the other*” and to listen that are being used. In short, the core tools of the AFD programme. Other elements, such as non-violent communication, are inspired by the organisation Maseriati where Khalil received training in facilitation, which has also inspired Selmya Movement in its start up phase.

*Khalil: “Most of the conflicts which has happened in our network, the solution was just to create a space for the different partners or parties to come and talk to each other. But in a way that is facilitated to guarantee that they will really listen to each other, actively listen to each other.”*

*Interviewer: “So you’re practising then what you teach?”*

*Khalil: “Yeah definitely, definitely. Because we have our conflicts. (...) We don’t use the talking stick, but we sometimes invite people to acknowledge what has been said, like try to summarise and repeat it. We don’t make people switch positions but we tell them to maybe take their time to try and put them selves, so it’s about the core of the tool. To try to invite people to be in this attitude, to have empathy towards the others, to really listen to the others, to acknowledged what has been said. All of this has been very efficient and effective.”*



AFD workshop during International Peace Day, Alexandria, Selmya Movement



The talking stick exercise, AFD workshop during International Peace Day, Alexandria, Selmya Movement

### 4.3. Case #3 – National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, Egypt

Interviewees for case #5:

- Mohammed Gaber, national ambassador for dialogue
- Head<sup>5</sup> of monitoring and evaluation unit at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
- 5 participants of the Egyptian Child Forum and 1 participant of the Health of Teenagers programme (all 15-16 years old).

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has two programmes for young people, where a dialogue component has been implemented: The programme for the Health of Teenagers, and the Egyptian Child Forum.

The Health of Teenagers is a training programme for teenagers aged 15-18. The programme aims at raising awareness about health issues such as the importance of hygiene and healthy nutrition as well as avoiding smoking and drugs. The training also addresses broader subjects such as how to succeed in school or at work, or how to avoid violence. The training is conducted in schools by volunteers from the civil society, in collaboration with teachers from the school.

The Child Forum is a forum for children or a sort of children's parliament, where children from Egypt's different governorates are elected. The forum consists of 155 children from all over the country, who represent their peers in their governorate. The forum is constructed so that children with different backgrounds are represented, e.g. children who are in school, children who have dropped out of school, children who are working, street children etc. The role of the members of the Child Forum is to represent their peers in relation to the government officials. The children are to be in on going contact with their peers in the governorate in order to represent their points of view.

#### **Aims of implementing dialogue at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood**

The dialogue component was implemented into the two programmes on the initiative of Mohammed Gaber, who is part of the AFD. Mohammed Gaber has been working for the National Council for seven years, but after he became part of the national team of AFD in 2015, he got the idea of implementing dialogue into the programmes he was already working on.

According to Mohammed Gaber, the main aim of implementing the dialogue component into the two programmes was to enable the young people to be a good representation for their peers, while at the same time teaching them how to talk to and present their ideas to government officials in a constructive way. The head of the unit explains why he – at a more

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<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately we do not have a record of his name



fundamental level – thinks that it is important to work with dialogue in relation to Egyptian youth:

*“Because of the conflicts in Egypt we always want to work on how to build peace with interaction between the children and how to work with peace, dialogue and the sense of belonging with the kids. And also how to respect each others opinion.”*

In the Health of Teenagers, dialogue is used as a tool in an interactive way of teaching about the subjects in the programme. In the Child Forum, the training is implemented when the members of the forum have been elected. The training focuses on the importance of dialogue and respecting other people’s opinion, and on how to communicate with their peers and government officials. In both programmes the dialogue activities lasts approximately for one or two days.

### **Effect on setting**

Effects of the dialogue activities on the setting are described on different levels. First of all, the dialogue activities have been targeted at helping the children and young people to express their opinions and feel confident doing it. The manager from the National Council describes it in the following way:

*“The children (...) are somehow shy, so the different tools are used to help them express themselves better. One thing is the talking stick, which helps them by giving them an equal chance to talk and help them articulate their thoughts better. (...) I use to get feedback from the children after the sessions of Ambassadors for Dialogue, and often a kid comes to me and says that he feels like the ‘king of the session’. Usually one or two will say that, but each time it comes from different people, which is special. (...) Everyone feels they are heard”.*

According to the manager it is very important for the children to learn how to express themselves and to be confident, because in the Egyptian society it is a general challenge facing children and young people that they are “*not a priority somehow*”. Mohammed Gaber shares this opinion. In his view, this ability has already had a vital effect on their setting – in this case the Egyptian society. This has manifested itself in that the members of the Child Forum have actually contributed to the National Strategy of Childhood in Egypt:

*“...They actually were part of setting the National Strategy for Childhood, and out of this came most of the law or the amendments of the Law of the Child Protection or Services in Egypt. So this [the ability to talk to government officials and formulate their needs in a good way] has enabled them to contribute to the strategy much more efficiently.”*

This is a very tangible example of how dialogue activities have affected the setting on a large scale.

On a smaller scale, the participants mention a variety of examples outside their activities related to the Child Forum and the Health of Teenagers. One example is the participant explaining how:

*"...I have been helping the people in my own street on how to deal with their problems and misunderstandings using the same ideas that I got from the workshop."*

They also see an effect on the internal corporation of the programme participants. E.g. there is less bullying between the young people after the dialogue component has been added to the programmes. The head of section explains:

*"In the FaceBook groups that they have to get together before the training, there will be more fights than after the dialogue training, more fights and bullying each other. After the dialogue training it is more interactive and the tone is less aggressive and more accepting".*

In his opinion, Egyptian youth face a lot of challenges. One is that they have a weak sense of *belonging* to the Egyptian society. The gathering of children from different governorates, backgrounds etc. in the Child Forum is described as an example of a place, where conflicts arise because of these differences. Two participants explain:

*"In the camp in Cairo there was a certain participant who we did not like, and we felt that she had an attitude problem. But then Mohammed [Gaber] gave us an exercise to understand where she is coming from, her environment, her background, and why is she behaving in that way. And now we are actually friends".*

*"In the camp there was a lot of misunderstandings in the Cairo team because we come from different districts, but again Mohammed [Gaber] gave us an exercise to understand where we are coming from and see each other's perspective and it helped us a lot, in like being in harmony with each other for the rest of the camp."*

This of course is important in order for the young people to cooperate and create results, but according to the head of section it is also important when seen in a larger context of the Egyptian society.

*"In Egypt we have passed through different phases where we have been divided and there are different tries of working on dividing the people in general, so what presses us forward is accepting the other and understanding the other. Even the people who say that they believe in dialogue, they believe in dialogue as long as their opinion is the right opinion. And just challenging that and accepting others opinion is what this is about. I believe in the statement that my opinion is right, but that it can also be wrong, and other people's opinion can be wrong, but can also be right".*

One of the participants expresses a similar notion: That it is a general problem in Egypt that people do not try to listen and understand each other's perspectives:

*"In the workshop (...) he [the Ambassador for Dialogue] introduced the basic techniques of dialogue and how to listen to different points of view, and they talked about how they can see other people's perspective and how they see one subject from different angles. I think that this is one of the main problems of the Egyptian society."*

In the opinion of the interviewees, dialogue activities strengthen the understanding and positive interaction between the participants. This decreases the level of conflicts and

improves the corporation between them, but in a bigger perspective, the improved understanding of people from different backgrounds, might also lead to a stronger sense of belonging to the Egyptian society as a whole.

### Effects on participant level

According to the head of the unit, an evaluation of the first year of dialogue activities show that *“this way of working is causing development in the reactions of the children during the sessions and their engagement”*. He thinks that the interactive component and the fact that the dialogue is *practiced* through exercises, not just presented as theoretical ideas, is an important part of the explanation of the positive effect of the dialogue activities:

*“What was interesting about the sessions [of AFD] is that they are interactive, they are build on competitions and different activities, so it is a different way of interaction. A very small example is having a one-hour lecture talking about accepting the other, and then the children get nothing out of it. Instead you can just do a simple exercise like the thing with the letter w<sup>7</sup> (...) and then they could get the meaning out of it in a simple exercise.”*

Mohammed Gaber describes different levels of effect for the participants. First of all he has noted that when the youth from the Child Forum talk to their peers in their governorate, they do not try to impose their own agenda on them, and do their best to listen and gather the different opinions. The participants say that they use their knowledge about dialogue when talking to their peers, and they also explain how they use the techniques in other kinds of volunteer work:

*“We started to implement it [the dialogue techniques] on our own when we were back in Cairo [after the workshop]. So we started in the orphanages and seeing what the children in need are really in need for, so they can have it (...) I tried to implement the techniques in terms of understanding the nature of every kid and how to talk to everyone in a different way. And how to break the ice and talk about their day and how they spent their day and feel important. (Laughing) It was much easier for us to talk to the kids in the orphanages after taking the workshop, because we live nice and there is a difference to the lifestyle that the children in the orphanages have. We think that the children in orphanages feel that we are more blessed than they are, so they tend to be more aggressive. So we used the workshop to understand their perspectives and deal with them in a much better way - but we still face challenges.”*

The participants explain that the dialogue activities have had a great effect on their personal relations to their parents, siblings or friends. One participant explains:

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<sup>7</sup> He refers to the exercise where participants sit in a circle and a drawing of a **“w”** is placed in the middle. Participants from two sides will see the letter w while participants from the other two sides see the number 4, which in Arabic is written: ξ

*"I used to have a lot of misunderstandings with my mother about spending a lot of time out of the house. After the workshop I realized that I have not been communicating well enough, I have not been telling her what is going on in my life so my mother would understand more. So I started communicating much more and much better with my mother, so we are not in disagreement anymore."*

On a third level, both the youth and Mohammed Gaber say that the dialogue tools have increased the young peoples understanding of themselves and their own opinions. One participant highlights the importance of the way the trainers practiced dialogue. The participants felt they were taken seriously and that the trainers were interested in listening to their opinions.

In general the participants describe a very positive experience with the dialogue activities, but all of them think that additional training would be preferable. One challenge mentioned is that part of the training focuses on how to communicate messages to government officials, but that the participants often do not feel that the officials listen enough to their opinions, and they feel a need for more training on how to handle this challenge.

#### **Effects on an organisational level**

Because of the positive effect of the dialogical approach in the Child Forum and in the Health of Teenagers, there has been an internal recommendation for other programmes under the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood to use it. Furthermore the dialogue activities have spread to other groups that the unit it self is working with. The head of the unit explains:

*"Most of the work is fieldwork with the children, so we use the exercises with the children, but in the office it is the way we think. We actually use the tools as well, it is not only with the children, we use the tools as well in different trainings for the teachers with a bigger age group. An example is the training that we have been conducting for doctors from the social health insurance, we were conducting the training but the training was very stiff, so we proposed different activities which we actively used and so on and they were consistent in the beginning but then at the end they said that they could not imagine that it would turn out this way and they were very happy."*

He finds that working with dialogue has had an impact on the team responsible for the two programmes, and that the way they deal with each other has changed:

*"...they saw how effective the tools were with the children and how they were helping the children, so they changed into a more simple way and calmly trying to understand each other and accept each others opinions".*

Thus in spite of the fact that dialogue activities have not yet been implemented systematically within other programmes at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, it can be said to gradually spread into activities on different level within the organization.

#### 4.4. Case #4 – With dialogue we can rise up and progress, Jordan

Interviewees for case #4:

- Zeyad, Ambassador for Dialogue
- Abeer, Manager at Princess Basma Centre
- 2 Participants who have attended dialogue workshops facilitated by Zeyad in the Princess Basma Centre: Saher, who is involved in the project called Makani and Taiseer, who is now a member of the national team of Ambassadors for Dialogue and who has been a volunteer at the Princess Basma Centre.

“With dialogue we rise up and progress” is a dialogue initiative implemented in Ma’an in Southern Jordan. The initiative was started by a group of young people, who wished to work with the approach and methods of AFD, but only one of them, Zeyad, is actually part of the AFD. “With dialogue we can rise up and progress” focuses primarily on implementing dialogue workshops in universities and schools, addressing children from 10 years old and older.

Furthermore, Zeyad and “With dialogue we can rise up and progress” also facilitate workshops and dialogue activities for young people at the Princess Basma Centre in Ma’an. The Princess Basma Centre houses a lot of different activities, organisations and volunteer initiatives, and has 38 employees and 130 volunteers. This has led to a number of other dialogue activities in and around the centre. One example is a group of mothers, who, after hearing about the dialogue activities organised for their children, showed interest in participating in similar activities. The activities of “With dialogue we can rise up and progress” therefore now include dialogue workshops for mothers, implemented in the Princess Basma Centre.

Case #4 is a bit different from the other cases, because it does not as such represent 3 different levels of interviewees (see paragraph 1.5), but instead the interviewees represent different programmes, which have been inspired by AFD methods as presented to them by Zeyad.

##### **Aims of implementing dialogue**

According to Zeyad, the aim of dialogue activities in schools and universities is to teach children and young people to use dialogue as a tool in regards to understanding and interacting with their surroundings, not least because of the complex political situation in Jordan and the Middle East: *“Personally, I like to focus on the group in the schools, over ten years old, because they are considered as a vulnerable environment for deviation, violence or extremism (...) If we can influence them with dialogue, then they will be strong enough and it will be harder to affect them with the negative things.”*

To begin with, “With dialogue we can rise up and progress” initiated the visits to schools themselves, but after visiting schools 4-5 times, the school principals started to ask for more workshops. Subjects of workshops for children are typically their relationship to their friends and how to communicate to each other without conflicts.

Before Zeyad learned about dialogical methods through his engagement in AFD, he trained young people in life skills, e.g. listening, anger management and communication. After joining the AFD he decided to also include the dialogical approach into the life skills training, and he finds this very fruitful. One element in life skill-training is anger management, and by including the dialogue-aspect, he can explain to the participants that *“we will not reach the point of anger if we follow the steps and the values of the dialogue (...) we will not reach anger levels because we will learn how to control our anger”*.

With regards to the workshops for mothers, adults or mothers have not been a group who the ambassadors are trained to address in their workshops. Consequently Zeyad developed a special version of workshops tailored for this group in collaboration with Mahmoud Hishmah from the WE Centre. The aim of the workshop addressing the mothers was to make them aware of the benefits of using dialogue when raising their children.

### **Effect on setting**

The dialogue activities facilitated by Zeyad at the Princess Basma Centre have inspired some of the other activists to implement dialogical activities and attitudes in their activities. The Princess Basma Centre is therefore a good example of how activities of the AFD can produce a ripple effect and impact on the world outside of the programme.

A specific example of this is Abeer, who became acquainted with the subject of dialogue through participating in the workshops for mothers at the Princess Basma Centre. Abeer is responsible for the department for social and psychological support at the centre, and she is working on a project about children who abandon school. She became acquainted with Zeyad and AFD in 2013, and has been inspired to implement the dialogical attitude in her work with children and families. Amongst other things, Abeer is responsible for a programme focussing on children dropping out of school. She has been working with this programme for a number of years, but was experiencing challenges with actually creating an effect. After attending a couple of workshops with Zeyad she initiated a meeting with him, and told him about the challenges: *“I told him that the community is not really accepting and recognising what we are saying and that we need a new way, and I suggested to do a new initiative”*. In this new initiative, dialogue would become an important component in the work with children and their families. According to Abeer, Ma'an is an area characterized by conservative values and *“in Ma'an dialogue is not really the culture and people don't listen to each other.”*

Based on what she learned in the dialogue workshops, Abeer thought that a dialogical approach would be fruitful not only in relation to the children, but also to their parents:

*“It is not only important with the kids, because for example if a girl is leaving school, you can talk to her and have a dialogue, but it is more important to talk to the parents, so I also work with the parents to teach them how to have dialogue and how to talk themselves out of their issues. So in the beginning it was really hard and frustrating, because the parents, it is not easy talking to them about this, especially if they are saying like, »we got them out of the school to work, and now you want them back to the school«, but through the workshops, I was taught how to be more patient and how to observe all these things to go to the conclusion. And we also worked with religious speech to go to them. So through religion it was also, it helped, because people will listen*

*to more religious speech, so we used it, how the religion is telling people to have a dialogue and not just »do this and do that«, so through religion we are getting through to the parents. Now the programme is number one in the kingdom. For five years no one came to the programme, but then when we started with the dialogue to implement through it, it became number one in the kingdom, and we were recognised by USA, the UNICEF and the Queen”*

For Abeer and her programme the dialogue component has been crucial, and in her opinion it has had a great effect on both parents and children to work in this way. She has used the dialogical approach towards the children as a way to show them alternatives to dropping out of school:

*”Especially with the females in the centre it was really empowering, because you are talking about children who left school and they are trying to earn money, so it is not easy to tell them to come back. So first of all, we went to the children and told them to come and try talking to us, just as an experience. And we gave them life skills, simple life skills, and we didn’t tell them to go back to school because of the curriculum, because this is why they left, so we cannot do that. And then we started talking to them about the future and how it could affect them, and we tried to put it in a way that, ‘how to get money out of this thing’, because that is what they are interested in. So they used the dialogue and how to talk smoothly with the people and then the children that were taking this course started convincing their parents to come and see, like ‘Hear Mrs Abeer what she says’. And some parents came two or three times, not only mothers, even fathers, and they were telling us how they used to, let’s say, hit their children or scream at them. So this is really a new way ‘how we can dialogue with our kids”*

In this way Abeer and her team started to work with the children and telling them about their alternatives to dropping out of school. The team has also worked a lot with the parents, both individual families and in workshops where they have worked on creating a dialogue between parents and children:

*One of the things that I did was to make a brainstorm session with the girls, where I told them »come out to me and tell me what did you do, did you do something wrong? And where did you miss up in life? Everything is confidential with me.« And I tried to talk to them and I took notes, and I took some of them in private one to one, to talk about these things. And after that I did a bigger discussion session with their mothers, and I talked about what the girls were going through, without saying names. At the same time I used dialogue for the girls and their mothers to be in the same room and try to work out the issues. So one of the sessions I did, I would bring the girls on one side, and their mothers on the other side and bringing up the issues, and the mothers would say »no this is impossible, our girls would never do this.« And I would talk to them about how »All you think about is how to cook, how to take care of your husbands.« And over there they prefer male kids over female, so »all your attention is to the males, and you are forgetting your daughters. And your daughters are always taught in how to cook or clean up and no one listens to them. So there is a lot of things that are happening, your girls are going on Facebook on their own way or going online and other things.« And literally what I said in was »Open dialogue with your daughters.«”*

In Abeer's experience, the programme has resulted in convincing the families about the need for the children to finish school, and it has also had effects regarding the approach to raising children:

*"Now what is happening is that people are asking us to come to their houses to help them fix issues (...) Now people are telling me »please come and convince her father, because he is not allowing her [my daughter] to Amman on a trip, so can you come and have this conversation«, or »my child, my boy is doing wrong things, so I want you to come and talk to him about it«."*

And she is teaching the parents about what it means to have dialogue with their children, and that they need to build a relationship based on openness and trust, so the children actually tell their parents about problems they might have. She describes the effect of the programme like this:

*"At the beginning the parents were looking at it like it is just talk, and they will do nothing of what you are saying. But then they started to see the difference in their children, their children are being more calm, their children, instead of, if the parents tell them not to do something and be angry and upset, now the children are more relaxed, and they are talking to their parents instead of fighting with their parents about any issue, which made lots of fathers embarrassed how their children could take in, even if something they did not like, and now more parents are actually doing so with the dialogue, and believing that it could make some change."*

Furthermore some of the children of the programme have adopted the approach themselves, and want to do dialogue workshops to inform the community about the reasons for leaving school. Some of the children:

*"...asked for a dialogue session with the school, they do not go to anymore because of some troubles or problems. They wanted to do a dialogue in the school between them and the other students, and they wanted them to see that they did something and they are not nothing. And they did a workshop about smoking: Is it prestige or just wrong behaviour? And these children want to take it further and to start the initiative of how to let the community know, that even if I left school that does not mean that I am a bad person and that I will go to jail? So they are requesting now for dialogue sessions in wider area, so the people will understand this."*

In Abeer's understanding, all of these examples illustrate how her participation in AFD dialogue workshops has inspired a new approach to her work with children and parents, which she believes has had a great effect on the persons involved and also at a more fundamental level on the culture of communication between parents and children.

Sahar represents another example of how participation in an AFD dialogue workshop has led to another approach to her work. Inspired by dialogue workshops at the Princess Basma Centre, Sahar has implemented dialogue in her work with vulnerable children:

*"Through our discussions with the children, we have noticed that there is an outbreak of extremism, e.g. that they see Daesh [ISIS] like ideology (...) We have recorded a dialogue*



*session with the youth about extremism, and we have heard their thoughts, which gave us a dangerous indication, because it seems that they hold the ideology (...) Because we are working with the vulnerable category of children, and we have noticed that they have social problems like being socially offensive and intolerant and those issues are connected to dialogue; thus, they need to go through dialogue trainings and workshops so they could understand the culture of dialogue and life skills, so they learn how to have tolerance, how to listen, respect the social diversity, and the positive thinking. Therefore, Zeyad's help is needed to tackle these issues, so he can do dialogue workshops in our centre, that is why I have asked his help."*

Sahar has initiated a corporation with Zeyad focusing on a dialogical approach with young people in order to affect them in a positive manner, to respect diversity etc.:

*"Now we are focusing on the social category that is called the "the passive group", I mean these groups of people who don't really have a clear opinion. So maybe they will agree with us and be on our side now, but the next moment they can easily disagree with us and take the side of other people who have different ideology. This category of people is very influential when collecting data and surveys used for our work, so our success remains on how we can have a positive impact on those people and influence their lives with positivity and respect for the international diversity and development away from conflicts. So, when we work hard on this group, we actually minimize the number of people who has this passive attitude until they almost disappear by the time. So it is best to have a strategy on how to influence those people in a positive way, consequently minimizing their numbers, and the strategy should certainly not be with the direct confrontation I meant by the real change in their thoughts. But we do not mean that we will ask them to create a party with us against others, we would like to influence positively as many as we can from the passive group in the community so it will become a minority and the odd in the society"*

In this way they are working on fighting extremism by working with dialogue and spreading positive attitudes towards other people.

### **Effect on participant level**

Zeyad's experience is that the students and other participants in general have a very positive experience with the workshops. In Zeyad's opinion the positive experience is caused by the open approach and the fact that they get attention at the workshop, so they feel that the facilitators are interested in hearing what they have to say. Many students have told Zeyad that the dialogue workshop was the first time for them to have a training that made them happy, and that someone valued their judgement and opinion. "With dialogue we can rise up and progress" also gets very positive feedback from principals, teachers etc. who continue to ask for more workshops. The teachers typically attend workshops with their classes, and Zeyad was also asked to conduct two evening workshops for some of the teachers, who wanted to work more with dialogue in their own classes. Zeyad knows that some of the teachers, who have attended workshops, have implemented some of the dialogical tools after the workshops. This he knows, because they have invited him to join activities where he has experienced it himself.

The experience of Zeyad is that the mothers also have a positive experience with and a significant payoff from the workshops: *"We have felt the positive impact of these sessions when the mothers came back to the centre asking to attend more sessions, (...) they did not know who we are exactly, and what Ambassadors means, but they only wanted us to come and give them more sessions, because they felt that we are different in a very positive way. We are not like others who do sessions to take photos and waste their time."*

#### **Effect on an organisational level**

Saher experience that the dialogue activities have effected the environment at the Princess Basma Centre, where there has also been specific dialogue workshops for the employees at the centre. In her opinion, they now have a more positive attitude towards each others proposals and opinions: *"We learned how to understand, respect and communicate with each other as colleagues and to respect the pressure of work every one has, and be flexible."*

#### **4.5. Case #5 – Nazal School, Jordan**

Interviewees for case #5:

- Lina and Bayan, national ambassadors for dialogue who have implemented workshops at Nazal School. Both have also previously worked as coordinators at the WE Centre, and Lina is a former international ambassador.
- Mervat and Rima, teachers at Nazal School
- 4 participants (girls, 15-16 years old) now attending 11<sup>th</sup> grade at another school. Last year they were 10<sup>th</sup> grade students at Nazal School and here participated in dialogue workshops facilitated by the international team of AFD.

Nazal School is a girls' school housing students from 6 to 16 years (10<sup>th</sup> grade). The school is located in an area inhabited by Palestinian refugees in eastern Amman.

#### **Aims of implementing dialogue at Nazal School**

The cooperation between AFD and Nazal School began with a visit by the AFD Dialogue Van.<sup>8</sup> On this occasion the ambassadors did 2-3 workshops at the school, and the school liked their work, so they were invited to come back.

The aim of the workshops has been to address some of the challenges, which the students at the school face, such as poverty and early marriage. Lina describes the issues at Nazal School like this:

*"Well as I said they are Palestine refugees, so they have been there for a long time, I would say. But these issues, because of bad settings – maybe poverty was one of the big*

<sup>8</sup> The AFD dialogue van is a an initiative where the ambassadors go to different cities, make brief stops at e.g. educational institutions and talk to students for a couple of minutes each.

*parts, sometimes girls they do not go to university just to continue their studies. So they get married easily, they don't know how to defend themselves, so it was a big part of the problem. And aside from that, the rest of the school, like bullying, the student's issues I would say. So yeah, different issues to tackle there."*

They have also discussed women's rights, for example what a woman could do, if she wants to travel or if she wants to be involved in politics. Abortion has been another subject up for discussion. The topics were discussed with the school principal before the workshop.

According to Lina and Bayan, dialogue can also be a mean to prepare the students for a future in other educational institutions, where they will meet students different from themselves: *"And these girls in Nazal school, they are living in a refugee camp, but eventually if they are going to universities, they will not be in the same area in the same circumstances, so they have to understand that there are people who are different from them".*

Different teams of ambassadors have conducted workshops at the school, from the national and the international team respectively. AFD have implemented approximately ten workshops at the school and they have attended different kinds of activities. Amongst other things they were invited to participate in a festival on mother's day, where they did dialogue activities by talking to parents, teachers and students. The interviewed students participated in a four-day workshop with the international team of ambassadors when they were in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade at Nazal School last year. The teachers participated in part of the workshops, but at some point they were asked to leave by the ambassadors for dialogue, because it was thought fruitful for the dialogue with the students.

### **Effects on setting**

Two main indications of the effect on the setting of the dialogue activities are described in the interviews.

First of all, both teachers and participants highlight the fact that they have gained new knowledge about the subjects discussed, most importantly about early marriage. It cannot be concluded that early marriage will be prevented amongst the students who have participated in the workshops, but the interviewees think that the dialogue activities have provided them with very useful tools, which they can use to approach the subjects, and that they have actually found words and ways to discuss important and very relevant issues.

The subjects discussed are seen as very sensitive, and are normally not the subject of discussion. One teacher explains:

*"The object or the field of the session was very intimate to us as Arabic community: Abortion, early marriage. So it has some specific psychological dimension to it. So it's not easy to talk about these subjects that their parents sometimes refuse to even discuss."*

But teachers and students experienced that dialogue exercises about these subjects made it easier to approach them, and they gained some tools and ways to actually talk about it. One student says:

*“Like the subject of early marriage, we are open in discussion. I got some new knowledge or background at least. I can talk about it now.”*

Another participant agrees:

*“I think that early marriage is wrong. But the team of dialogue ambassadors learned us a lot about early marriage. Like there is a way of speaking about it. You must not criticize other people, everyone has his own opinion about it, but you cannot criticize other people.”*

The interviewed teachers explain that even if they talk to the students about a lot of different subjects, there can also be subjects, which they themselves find difficult, partly because they are insecure about the reaction from the parents:

Interviewer: *“So was it also new to them [the students] to talk about these subjects at school or is it something that you’ve talked to them about in class?”*

Teacher 1: *“We speak with them at school about it. But not all issues. For example abortion, they don’t know anything about it because they are not in an age that allows discussing this issue.”*

Teacher 2: *“Also you know religion interfering with this kind of issue.”*

Interviewer: *“Do you think that this way with the games, is that a good way to talk about these topics?”*

Teacher 1: *“Yes it gives them the impression that it is simple matters. You can play and say what you think about it, it’s not a big issue. But if you said it without games, »okay girls today we talk about abortion, in our religion it’s forbidden and it’s killing an innocent spirit« and stuff like that. Oh my God. They will maybe take a wrong picture to their parents and then next day the parents will come, and we will have a scandal in our school. They would say: »What are you teaching our girls? What does abortion have to do with education? What does early marriage have to do with Arabic language or science?«.”*

According to the teachers they have not had negative reactions from the parents after the workshop, and they think that some of the parents feel relieved that the girls have learned about these subjects through the workshops, so they do not have to talk to the girls about it themselves.

Another effect on the setting is the fact that the teachers feel that they can see indications of a less harsh tone between some of the students. They describe that some the more ‘notable’ students changed their behaviour in a way, which surprised the teachers. One of the teachers explains about two specific girls, with whom she experienced a significant change after the dialogue workshop with the group of international ambassadors (who are both male and female):

Teacher: *“...they went 180 degrees different from the way I know them before. Really changed”*

Interviewer: *“How would you describe the way they changed?”*

Teacher: *“How they speak to you. The first day they were so shy. And then they were (...) not aggressive in a bad way, but like this: »it’s my idea, it’s my mind, I will never change it. Destruct it, destruct it.« After that when I took them, me [names of the two girls] and another two boys from the school, they were treating me and even acting with everyone in a smooth way. Okay like that. It’s a better way. [Names of the two girls] you are speaking in this way. It was something impossible (...) And I’m not exaggerating.”*

Interviewer: *“Why do you think they changed?”*

Teacher: *“Maybe because they met new people. Boys and girls, they were many at the sessions. So they a little bit gain how to speak with other persons. Otherwise there were males and females, so this is something. Another one the men participated in every session, your presence is important go. Like that I was telling them, stay, hear what they are talking about.”*

Interviewer: *“So you encouraged them to participate?”*

Teacher: *“A little bit.”*

Interviewer: *“Because they were acting shy or?”*

Teacher: *“For the shyness in their character and for them to be a role model for the other girls. If those girls were involved, for the other girls it’s easy to be involved. Like that.”*

According to Lina and Bayan, the positive effect on the way the students interact with each other might be caused by the way they approach bullying in the dialogue workshop:

*“...So we were talking about bullying in itself, »okay what about if it happened to you. If you are the one who is bullying, how would you react«, so it was kind of a good shock, we always have this, it is like learning by shock. So I’m not asking about not bullying, but at the end I’m giving you this conclusion, »okay if you are the one who is bullied or if you are the one who is bullying, how would you react?« So I think this kind of shock it clicks something for the students.”*

Furthermore the teachers have begun to use some of the exercises themselves. They think that exercises such as the talking stick and the ‘guess who’-game will be useful, e.g. if they experience that the students do not listen to each other:

Interviewer: *“In what situation do you think you would use it [the dialogue exercises]?”*

Teacher 1: *“If the girls are not hearing each other”*

Teacher 2: *“I think if I use this way, they will learn to listen to each other”.*

In this way the teachers have received some new tools or means to work with creating a good tone and strengthen a dialogical culture between students in their classes. It is difficult for teachers and students to describe the effects more definitively, because the students who participated in the workshops have now graduated from Nazal School. But the fact that some

of the students showed a more tolerant behaviour and that the teachers possess specific tools to make the students listen to each other, indicates that the dialogue workshops have improved the environment in the school by promoting a trend towards a better learning environment.

### **Effects on participant level**

The four interviewed participants describe an overall positive experience with the dialogue workshops, although according to the interviewed teachers, other participating students found the dialogue workshops a bit too long and repetitive. Ambassadors find that the student overall have reacted positively towards the workshops.

The interviewed students explain that their participation in the workshop has developed their self-confidence and trust in themselves. According to the students this effect was caused mainly by their meeting with the international ambassadors, through whom they experienced talking to foreigners for the first time. This meeting has made them less shy and more confident in talking to different kinds of people afterwards:

*“First when we discuss with people we never talked to before, it’s our first time to talk with these guys. Their style of dialogue was good, and they implant our confidence in our selves. And they gave us more trust to develop dialogue methods.”*

They also feel that they improved their skills in English language. The students explain that the workshops have provided them with knowledge about the importance of avoiding criticizing each other, even if they have different opinions.

Both teachers and students highlight one specific example, which illustrates the effect of the workshop on a participant level: As a result of the workshops two of the students became organisers of their graduation ceremony at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In the eyes of their teacher, their wish to organise the ceremony is a direct result of what they learned about themselves and of the self confidence they gained from this. She is very positive and surprised, and says: *“The ceremony was successful really because of them”*. The students themselves explain:

*“We were not shy at that day [graduation] because we talked with foreigners before. So we were free to talk more freely. We were like the producers of the ceremony (...) Dialogue class did not teach us about the graduation, but it gives us the confidence to talk (...) It gives for everyone who participate in that course to be more secure about themselves in the graduation ceremony.”*

Furthermore the teachers describe an effect in the way the girls deal with their families:

*“I think that the girls changed in dealing with their families. With their families, they changed how they dialogue with them. And with their friends.”*

### **Effects on an organisational level**

The teachers are very positive towards the workshops as well. They describe how they themselves learned something new and changed their opinions about some of the subjects

discussed. Furthermore they adopted a few of the exercises introduced in the workshops, e.g. the 'Guess who' game, which they now use in their own classes. They think that learning about dialogue has effected the perception of education among the teachers who participated in the workshops.



Interview with former participants of dialogue workshops, Nazal School



Dialogue event at Bishop's School, Amman, Jordan



#### 4.6. Case #6 – All Jordanian Youth Commission, Tafileh, Jordan

Interviewees for case #6:

- Ahmed, national ambassador and financial coordinator at the All Jordanian Youth Commission
- Siraj, coordinator at the All Jordanian Youth Commission
- 4 participants (girls, 15-16 years old) of a dialogue project run by the All Jordanian Youth Commission
- 1 teacher of the English Access Programme run by the Queen Aliya Centre

The All Jordanian Youth Commission is a locally based office, which is responsible for carrying out governmental development projects for the Jordanian youth in Tafileh. All activities are controlled nationally and include six programmes focusing on the empowerment of women, debate and dialogue culture, English language, youth voluntarism and anti-extremism. According to Siraj all six programmes include elements of dialogue, and dialogue remain essential to the success of any run project. In addition to these six programmes that are decided upon nationally, the All Jordanian Youth Commission in Tafileh runs two projects focusing particularly on dialogue.

The first dialogue project, which translates into *Dialogue become bigger and bigger*, consists of one-hour dialogue sessions at 10 local schools. In total 200 students have been trained in various dialogical topics and methods. The topics for these sessions are chosen based on relevance for the students and can include both topics related to school and society – e.g. recent constitution amendments. An exercise that is mentioned as particularly successful by both Ahmed and the participants is one that allows students to speak for one minute each.

At each school two students are chosen to be ‘mini-ambassadors’ for dialogue, or ‘dialogue knights’. These 20 selected students receive further training, a five hours workshop, to enable them to continue the dialogical process at their respective schools for another two months. Concluding the two months period the All Jordanian Youth Commission follow up with each school. Some of these ‘mini-ambassadors for dialogue’ are also part of the second dialogue project run by the Youth Commission; a youth leadership programme.

The youth leadership programme consists of five three-hour sessions held during the summer holiday. The programme is attended by 24 students and covers various topics related to youth leadership, amongst these dialogue. Ahmed from the All Jordanian Youth Commission facilitates all five sessions.

Apart from these two projects a dialogue club has been running on and off in Tafileh since October 2014. The club currently has 12 participants who meet monthly to practice dialogue. The All Jordanian Youth Commission also plans to initiate a project targeting university students.

### **Aims of implementing dialogue at the All Jordanian Youth Commission**

The two dialogue initiatives at the All Jordanian Youth Commission have been initiated by Ahmed. He has previously worked voluntarily as a coordinator for the All Jordanian Youth Commission and is currently employed as the financial coordinator, a position he has held since 2015. He has been involved in AFD as a national ambassador since 2013 and continues to be engaged locally in Tafileh. When Ahmed joined the AFD in 2013 he was working as a teacher, which is what he is originally trained as, and simultaneously worked with the Queen Aliya Centre.

Through training with the AFD Ahmed became interested in implementing a dialogical culture in various aspects of his life, here amongst the All Jordanian Youth Commission. The Youth Commission is a very small workplace with only 4 employees; Ahmed, Siraj, a driver and a clerk. Three out of four members of staff, Siraj included, are involved in the AFD national team. Hence Ahmed met no objections to this idea. Furthermore the All Jordanian Youth Commission in Tafileh answers to the national office in Amman, but are fairly autonomous in the implementation of the six projects as well as the two extra dialogue projects. Ahmed explains his motivation: *“Because it is a way of communication that I believe in, so I’d like everybody to believe in this way of communication. ... There is an objective through this kind of dialogue; how we can create new thoughts and that of course we needed for our planning for initiatives in any other programmes.”*

As Siraj was employed later than Ahmed, the dialogue projects were already implemented at the All Jordanian Youth Commission. He sees dialogue as an essential part of their work, and finds that the projects are *“reflections of the ambassadors for dialogue”*. Interestingly he finds the work of other local offices of the All Jordanian Youth Commissions to be equally focused on a dialogical approach.

### **Effect on setting**

The interviewees experience that the main effect of the dialogue activities is traceable on an individual participant level. But besides from the individual effect, they see two different types of effects on the setting, where dialogue activities are implemented.

One is the effect on the work of the All Jordanian Youth Commission itself. According to Siraj, dialogue principles have become fundamental to all of the six different projects, he coordinates:

*“In all programmes this dialogue is alive. Making decisions is a dialogue, debating is a dialogue, planning those projects with others is a dialogue. Every aspect there is a dialogue. The programme of “moderate messengers”<sup>9</sup> is also dialogue, English language courses is also teaching people how to dialogue. Our life is mainly a dialogue.”*

The teacher of the English Access Programme also *“sees the difference”* and experiences a change in the interaction of the students and an effect on their behaviour in the classroom.

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<sup>9</sup>Moderate messengers’ is a programme focussed on preventing extremism and violence amongst young people, and about how to face terrorism.

The English Access Programme began in February, but after the dialogue workshop of the youth leadership programme this summer, the students have implemented a new way of communication, are better listeners, show increased respect and mutual trust for one another, according to the teacher:

*“I have seen a difference with my students. They were noisy in the classes. So after the dialogue I see how they are changing. If they want to ask for something, they raise their hand. I have put a rule in my class to raise your hand, respect your teacher, speak in English, but sometimes they break the rules. But after the dialogue [workshops] I see the difference, they raise their hand »eh, could you, eh what about...«. Like this. In my class especially these days I see a difference. They like to share their ideas, they like to listen.”*

The teacher has participated in dialogue workshops together with the students and has with success started implementing the interactive teaching approach in several classes. Furthermore the students have begun to implement the dialogical approach in other kinds of activities such as the school radio, and in the sports classes. Ahmed has furthermore seen examples of former participants who are now in university, working on strengthening a dialogical culture in the universities. The interviewees also describe that dialogue training improves the ability to cooperate with people, who are different than you:

*“When I, you know, make some dialogue with other persons, there are people who are different in traditions and costumes, you know. So we have to reach the goals together, so this kind of dialogue teaches us how to deal with these kinds of persons (...) I have to talk what I have and listen to what he said also. It is not a condition »can I convince him or can he convince me.« The most important is that I have to listen to him. Maybe they cannot reach to a common point or common platform, the objective is to become more wise.”*

In different ways the informants describe an initiating trend of dialogue activities and the dialogical attitude spreading to new spheres, and this indicates a strengthening of a dialogical culture, which is being institutionalised by e.g. training students as ‘mini-ambassadors for dialogue’ and by the teacher implementing dialogue principles in her class.

### **Effect on participant level**

It is believed by Ahmed that an outcome of the *Dialogue become bigger and bigger*-project is an increased understanding of dialogue amongst the participants. Initially the students have no understanding of the difference between discussion and dialogue. However, Ahmed points out that two-three hours is too short time to ‘*produce a student that has a good idea about dialogue, but at least we give them some things that make them differentiate between dialogue and discussions.*’ This is why it is important that some students are trained further to become ‘mini-ambassadors’.

The four interviewed participants go to different schools but are all part of the two-year after-school English Access Programme and attended the youth leadership programme, both of which are run by the Queen Aliya Centre. They have received two workshops on dialogue; one through the *Dialogue become bigger and bigger*-project at their respective schools and one

through the youth leadership programme. All four participants were chosen as ‘mini-ambassadors’ at their school.

The participants are generally positive towards the workshops and the interactive method used. They found this way of learning fun and very different from the normal teaching methodology used in schools. In terms of effect they agree with Ahmed, that they have gained a better understanding of the concept of dialogue: *“We can differentiate now the difference between dialogue and discussion. ... It is one of the communication forms that has no losers and no winners.”* One participant explains how she has changed personally, and now has learned to listen to others – even if she is not convinced of the other person’s opinion. Listening exercises allowing one person at a time to talk have been especially effective in regards to this. Another participant adds that dialogue *“has become part of me; it is not like I have to take steps, or have to do so and so in order to have a successful dialogue, it is just a part of me.”* Several participants add that they have been able to use what they have learned when communicating with their families, both in terms of talking to parents and interacting with sisters and brothers.

Both participants and the teacher generally believe that the students have received sufficient training to be able to implement dialogue. However, it is suggested that some training is provided the teachers in order to increase the effect.

#### **Effect on an organisational level**

According to Ahmed the effect of implementing a the dialogical culture can be traced on an organisational level too; the staff at the Youth Commission have generally become better at communicating with each other in addition to an increased respect for one another. Some members of staff have since applied to join the national AFD team. However, several members of staff were already involved in the AFD and *“have the same principles”*, which makes it easy for everyone to agree on the approach.

#### **4.7. Case #7 – Øregård Gymnasium, Denmark**

Interviewees for case #7:

- Agnes and Manal, Ambassadors for Dialogue (International team 2016)
- Lars and Svend, teachers of religion, whose classes have participated in dialogue workshops several times
- Thor, teacher of social studies and coordinating teacher who arranges dialogue workshops in collaboration with DUF
- 9 participants of dialogue workshops: Francisca, Sisse, Victoria and Oliver, 1<sup>st</sup> year students (all aged 16) and Josefine, Ann-Sofie, Amalie, Oliver and Harald, 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (aged 18-19)

Øregård Gymnasium is a public high school in Hellerup, Denmark.

### **Aims of implementing dialogue at Øregård Gymnasium**

Øregård Gymnasium has had a close cooperation with the AFD through a 4-year period. At Øregård high school the main aim of the dialogue workshops has been to increase the intercultural understanding of the students through dialogue with the international Ambassadors for Dialogue.<sup>10</sup> In November 2016 the international team of AFD has implemented a total of 12 workshops at Øregård high school for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students attending classes in religion or social studies.

This year the aim of the workshops had been discussed in advance between DUF and the coordinating teacher at Øregård Gymnasium. It was the experience from earlier years that the students tended to loose interest for the workshop if they focused too much on dialogue as a concept. The understanding of the teachers is that the students are very interested in participating in the dialogue, whereas they are not very interested in a theoretical discussion about the concept of dialogue.

*One teacher explains: "I am thinking that it might be because the culture in the Middle East and in Denmark differs somewhat on this issue. There may be a point in focusing on it [the concept of dialogue] in the Middle East, whereas we have a one hundred year old tradition, a tradition at least 150 years old, of trying to communicate in a democratic way and this is what we are practicing with the students every day. We have a dialogue with them in almost every class, and here we build a framework and we tell them when they brake the rules of conversation (...) So they know quite well what dialogue is all about."*

It is up to the teachers to sign up their classes for the workshops, and the teachers who have chosen to do so explain that they see it as a part of the 'general education' of the students rather than something, which is directly relevant according to the specific aims of the course. It is also up to the teachers how they wish to incorporate the workshops into their classes. The teachers emphasize that they find it important for the students to have an open dialogue during the workshops, which is also the reason why they do not formulate a specific subject for the workshop in advance.

The team of international ambassadors is divided into groups of four, consisting of one Jordanian, one Egyptian and two Danish ambassadors, one of who has Middle Eastern roots. It has been up to each intercultural team of ambassadors to plan their own workshop, but they have been asked by the coordinators to reserve some time in the end of the day for questions from the students, and especially with the opportunity to ask questions to the Egyptian and Jordanian ambassadors. The workshops have duration of three hours, and are initiated by icebreakers and exercises such as the line game. The students find the length of the workshops sufficient.

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<sup>10</sup> Whereas the focus of the international team when facilitating workshops in Jordan has been to foster dialogue *between* the workshop participants rather than between the Danish ambassadors and the local participants, the focus in Denmark thus was a bit different.

### Effects on setting

It is difficult to say something conclusive about the effect of the dialogue activities on the setting at Øregård Gymnasium. However, interviewees agree that the workshops, and the meeting with youth from Jordan and Egypt are adding to the general education or the democratic education of the students. The three-hour workshop gives the students the opportunity to 'test' their understanding of 'people from the Middle East', and teachers and students agree that it adds nuances to their understanding of subjects much discussed in Danish media such as Muslims, refugees, Middle Eastern culture etc.

This "more nuanced perspective" is a result of the opportunity to ask questions they have been considering, but never had the opportunity to ask, and the fact that some of the exercises and stories of the Middle Eastern ambassadors have challenged the students' perceptions and surprised them with non-stereotypical opinions and experiences. The students also explain that the exercises of the workshop have given them the opportunity to develop their own opinions on certain subjects: *"It was a new way to explore my own opinion, and it was a fun way of doing it."*

The nuances added might add to the individual students understanding of culture, and give them a stronger starting point for meeting people from other cultures, as well as giving them a deeper insight to some of the subjects that they learn about in classes such as religion and social sciences. One of the teachers explains about having classes after the workshop:

*"When we are afterwards doing what you might call the key content of our class, well then they have some more specific elements to attach it to, they have better ways of nuancing the subjects. This year we are focussing on young Muslims in Denmark and in the Middle East, and now they have some young people, who they have talked to, and who are not like ideologies you are presented to via documentaries or something like that, so they have a new chance to add a perspective or to see the subject in a context and say 'well I was talking to Sam about this' or one of the others. So they have a better chance of including some hues, because they have met and talked to these people"*

And as such, it adds value to the general education of students in a very ambitious learning environment with only very few Muslim students.

### Effect on participant level

The interviewed students describe an overall positive experience with the dialogue workshop. The experience of the ambassadors is similar. They think that the students participated actively and had a lot of questions for the ambassadors.

The students mention the structure of the workshop, where the first part of the day focuses on exercises and dialogue, by the end of the day they have become comfortable enough to ask a wide range of questions to the ambassadors – including questions of a quite personal character. The exercises help the students to open up during the first part of the day. In a pleasant way the ambassadors make everybody join in on the discussion.

Especially the opportunity to ask questions to the ambassadors from Jordan and Egypt is highlighted as an important element by the students. They explain their outcome as related to

the personal interaction with young people from the Middle East, and the opportunity to discuss and get a more nuanced view on a variety of subjects. Adding to the nuanced perception, the students mention that some of the opinions of the foreign ambassadors were surprising to the students, for example they mention the female Egyptian ambassador giving a joke about polygamy.

One 3<sup>rd</sup> year student explains: *“... even if you know some people [with Middle Eastern background], if it is not your best friends, or your close friends, if it is maybe someone who sometimes are in your everyday activities, the first subject of conversation will not be, ‘well why are you wearing a veil’, you know.”*

According to one of the students, the best part of the workshop was: *“...that you could speak freely without any restrictions, and that you could ask about anything. Definitely that.”*

It is the experience of the teachers that the dialogue workshop and the meeting with the ambassadors make an impression on some of the students. One of the teachers has had students who have talked about the workshop at their final exam six months after the workshop, and another teacher explains:

*“My experience is that the experiences that they remember, are when they meet religious people, when they meet young people, who we only read about in books, and we actually get out and meet them. This is when something happens, and it sticks with them.”*

Based on this, teachers suggest that having ambassadors of similar age to the students could increase the impact. Although teachers see an impact on the students, not all students give much thought to the workshops afterwards.

### **Effect on an organisational level**

Due to a busy schedule and many on-going activities at Øregård Gymnasium, the interviewed teachers do not experience that the cooperation with DUF and the dialogue meetings in general, is receiving much attention from teachers whose classes are not part of the activities. The school hosts many projects and activities related to democracy, politics and religion and hence the dialogue workshops are just one activity amongst these. However, when the involved teachers discuss the AFD workshops with other teachers, there is a general understanding of this project being ‘a good thing’.



Workshop held by international ambassadors at Øregård Gymnasium



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## CHAPTER 5

### 5. BEST PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

This chapter provides a best practice assessment summing up the examples of extended impact given in the above cases. It gives a horizontal and transverse perspective on the aspects of impact described in the seven cases with a focus on the setting, where dialogue activities are implemented.

#### 5.1 Understanding the setting of dialogue activities

The study shows that in order to describe an effect or an impact of the dialogue activities of Ambassadors for Dialogue (both within and outside the spheres of control of the programme), it is necessary to understand certain logics of the setting or the context in which the activities are implemented.

##### **A (school) system not based on dialogue**

Many interviewees of this study share the opinion that the dialogue activities of the AFD have a positive impact in Jordan and Egypt, because the approach of AFD differs a lot from the traditional approach to children and young people in schools, in families and in society as such. As we have seen, participants from different cases experience that the dialogue workshop is one of the first times that they have felt their voices heard, and where they have felt that someone actually listened and valued their opinions. One participant explains about the difference between the approach in schools and in the dialogue workshop in the following way (#3):

*“The main difference is the interactive process and not like in school. In school the teachers do not ask for our opinions and we are not allowed to talk or say anything except if we have a question at the end of the period. But Mohammed and his team were talking as friends to us, they were not superior in any way and they were interacting with us.”*

This analysis does not only come from the participant-level, but is shared by ambassadors and the “management-level”, e.g. the head of section at the National Council, who sees a general problem with children and young people not being “a priority” in the Egyptian society (Case #3). However this is not only a situation found in schools and in relation to young people. Interviewees describe a similar experience of a culture, where people in general are not very good at listening to each other. Other examples are the stories of Abeer and her approach to helping families in Ma’an, Jordan (Case #4) and Khalil’s experiences in Egypt within spheres of political parties and peace activists, who are not necessarily good at listening to each other (Case #2).

A central explanation of the positive change of the AFD approach and activities is thus the approach to young people and to culture of dialogue in Egypt and Jordan.

### A difficult political situation

Adding to this, interviewees across cases explain that the political situation in Jordan and Egypt is also an important part of the motivation for implementing dialogue activities and an important factor in understanding the positive effects of these activities.

Across cases (e.g. #1, #3 and #4) interviewees see a need for a positive influence on young people in order to counteract e.g. religious radicalisation and frustrations because of poverty, which are experienced as potential threats at the present, especially to young people who can be vulnerable and susceptible to propaganda from groups like Daesh/ISIS. Ambassador Lina says:

*“I think generally in hot areas, whatever is happening around us is affecting people, so it does not matter if we are school students or if we are grown ups or 30 years old, it does not matter. We are in this kind of difficult area and these difficult consequences are giving the students and everyone here some difficult time. So we all talk about ISIS and we all talk about, although the students, I mean these young students are talking about ISIS. They hear it from their parents, they hear it on TV, they know about poverty. They are maybe in a family or in a home where they have lots of bad consequences of issues there or are suffering from. So I think, I don’t say that poverty or ISIS or whatever happens are the main reasons for our issues, but I would say it is a big factor. So if we do not tackle it when they are young, we will suffer later on. And if I think about it from another point of view and another perspective, now the complexity or the complexion of Jordan and of society is changing. We are having lots of refugees, so if I don’t accept them, and I don’t accept differences and changes, I will be screwed up in, I don’t know, ten years. So I have to tackle these issues now, because if I do not accept that there are Syrian refugees, and I don’t, like »I hate you being here around«, I don’t know what the country would end up being like. So different circumstances around us, so I think that dialogue I would say it is the solution.”*

In Egypt, several of the interviewees also speak about big political, geographical, religious and social differences between different groups of the population, which can make it difficult for young people to have a sense of belonging to Egypt as such (e.g. Case #3), and which on an everyday level can feed conflicts between young people in educational institutions, in NGO’s and other settings where they are brought together. In these cases, both participants and other interviewees see an important effect of the dialogue activities when they encourage participants to take on each others perspectives, really listen and repeat the opinions of their peers, or try to understand the consequence of the life and situation of another person.

It is important to understand the political and social situation and potential tensions caused by these factors in the Middle East of today, when looking at the effect of dialogue activities and of the Ambassadors for Dialogue as such.

This is also why the implementation of dialogue activities in Denmark has a different focus than in the Middle East. As we have seen in the example from Øregård Gymnasium (#7), the dialogical culture is strong in the Danish School system, but a political focus on e.g. Muslims and the Middle East makes it relevant for the students to meet young people from the Middle

East and have the opportunity to ask questions and test their conceptions of about Middle Eastern people, culture etc.

## 5.2 A positive change – the effect of the activities of the AFD

Looking across the cases, several effects of the activities within and outside the spheres of control of the AFD, can be identified:

### Strengthening corporation

The cases illustrate how dialogue can strengthen the internal corporation between youth in different settings where they meet (Cases #1, #2, #3). Not only does this diminish the conflict level of the participants and thus have an internal effect. It can also help creating tangible results because an organisation less occupied by internal conflicts is more likely to create external results and effecting surroundings such as the political setting, in which it is working. In the words of the head of section at the National Council (#3):

*"They [participants of the Child Forum] get the capacity trainings because they need to be able to listen to other children's challenges and they need to be able to articulate them to the ones responsible. So they have training in the importance of dialogue and the importance of accepting different opinions and the importance of not fighting with a certain group of people. The thing about this is that they learn how to get in dialogue with people their age and they also learn how to get in dialogue with people who are responsible and people who are actually older than them, they do this transfer of the challenges that faces the children and communicate it to the people who are responsible in the same way."*

### Supporting a dialogical culture

Supporting a dialogical culture by teaching workshop participants 1) to listen to other peoples perspectives 2) that the aim of communication is not always to convince the other party that your opinion is correct, but that it can also be to have a better understanding of the opinions of others 3) To practice in expressing your opinion and be confident when doing this and thereby e.g. affect governmental officials (#3)

### Strengthening of organisational culture

Selmya (#2) is an example of how the approach of the AFD can strengthen the organisational culture of a bigger network. The main explanations of this is the strong identity of the ambassadors, who are experienced as reliable and well-prepared to a degree which does not necessarily characterise all kinds of volunteers and activists.

### Improved leaning environment

Introducing a new way of learning in schools, where teachers see a positive effect of a more dialogical approach to teaching, where dialogue activities are described as creating less conflicts between the students, and a better relationship between teachers and students, because the students feel heard and thus act in a smoother way towards teachers and peers.

### **Working in areas characterised by conflicts or conservative values**

Making it possible to actually implement NGO-activities in communities characterised by conflicts (#1) or by conservative attitudes towards women and children (#4). In the mentioned cases it has been the experience of the interviewees that the dialogical approach has been a necessity in making the local community accept the presence of Rwaad, and this approach has also been a – successful – method to approaching children who drop out of school and their parents.

### **Dialogue as a way to bring up sensitive issues**

Introducing a way of addressing sensitive topics such as abortion and early marriage (#5), religion (#7) or the Egyptian revolution (#2). By addressing these subjects through dialogue exercises, the participants feel it easier and less dangerous to talk about – and even feel that they are offered a new vocabulary to use when addressing these issues.

## **5.3 Why does it work?**

The study points to couple of central explanations of the effect of the AFD approach, which are repeated across the cases:

### **The importance of dialogical practise**

Interviewees share the opinion that the interactive approach of the AFD and the ability to engage participants are important explanations on the effect of the dialogue activities. The exercises are efficient, because dialogue is *practiced*, not just taught as a theoretical concept. To use the phrasing of the head of unit at the National Council (#3):

*“What was interesting about the sessions [of AFD] is that they are interactive, they are build on competitions and different activities, so it is a different way of interaction. A very small example is having a one-hour lecture talking about accepting the other, and then the children get nothing out of it. Instead you can just do a simple exercise like the thing with the letter w<sup>11</sup> (...) and then they could get the meaning out of it in a simple exercise.”*

The exercises and interactiveness seems particularly important in Jordan and Egypt, where participants express that talking about dialogue is an entirely new thing. But also in the Danish case, where dialogue is thought to be an integrated part of the culture already, the students see icebreakers and exercises as important for participants to feel comfortable asking questions – also of a quit personal character – to the international ambassadors in the last part of the dialogue workshop (#7).

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<sup>11</sup> He refers to the exercise where participants sit in a circle and a drawing of a “w” is placed in the middle. Participants from two sides will see the letter w while participants from the other two sides see

the number 4, which in Arabic is written: ٤

The importance of dialogical practise and the increased knowledge about the concept of dialogue was also a central finding in the previous impact study. The extended impact study confirms this finding, and shows that the importance is the same, even for participants who have received less intense training than the ambassadors themselves.

### **Making participants feel seen and heard – and giving them the confidence to express their opinions**

Another explanation of the effect of the AFD approach is the ability of ambassadors to make participants feel *seen* and *heard*. Across cases participants explain that participation in AFD activities have made a great impression on them, because the meeting with the ambassadors has been the first time for them to feel that their opinion was valued and important. One example is the students at Nazal School, who were inspired to organise their graduation ceremony as a result of participating in the workshop of the international ambassadors. One of the students describes her own feeling of development throughout the days of AFD workshops in the following terms:

*“At the beginning we were shy, it was a small team and we were shy to talk about anything with them. But day after day we became more open with them and they became more interactive with us. Better and better. This, you know, gave us the confidence in the graduation [ceremony] and there are so many officials attending this graduation, so many people you know, there are families of all students, some high officials also. But this made us more confident in talking about ourselves.”*

Participants also talk about a feeling of equality with the ambassadors, the feeling of being met at an equal footing and the feeling that the ambassadors have a sincere interest in hearing what they have to say. One of the ambassadors describe a similar feeling of equality, when he explains about his relation to the youth he has been training: *“...I feel that they are my friends and that we have a personal bond now more than being a trainer and trainees.”*

### **The exercises work in many different settings**

Another interesting finding of the extended impact study is that the approach and the exercises of the AFD are experienced to be efficient in many different settings and with different groups of participants. Several of the ambassadors have tried facilitating workshops in different settings, for example in both disadvantaged urban areas and in universities.

One could think that university students or political activists are more used to reflect on the concept of dialogue, and that the starting point of the workshops would be different from working with younger and uneducated youth, but in the experience of the interviewed ambassadors, this is not necessarily the case. One ambassador phrases it like this:

*Interviewer: “I was wondering about the experience you have in teaching about dialogue. Because I would think that it is probably different having dialogue workshops with the students at university, who probably already know a little bit about this concept, and then the people in the disadvantaged urban area. Can you tell us a little bit about that?”*

Ambassador: *“Actually it’s the other way around. It’s much easier to work in the urban slum than in the faculty. Because [in the urban slum] it’s an NGO and they are more accustomed to the training culture or the workshop culture. As for the students they are more accustomed to lectures and it’s more difficult for them to work within the workshop culture.”*

Interviewer: *“So it’s difficult for the students to actually participate actively in the workshops?”*

Ambassador: *“Yes, it’s much much harder.”*

Interviewer: *“But did they have, in the university, have more of an idea about the concept of dialogue? Because you said before that when teaching the first workshop in the slum they didn’t really know about the dialogue concept.”*

Ambassador: *“They didn’t know anything about anything.”*

The quote highlights that knowledge about dialogue and the practise of a dialogical culture is not necessarily more common amongst e.g. well educated people. The case of Selmya (#2) confirms this point by illustration that a dialogical culture is not necessarily very mature amongst activists in the peace movement – they also need training in order to learn how to listen to each other.

Thus, the cases illustrate that AFD exercises work across different settings and with diverse groups of youth.

#### 5.4 A ripple effect – dialogue is not only for young people

The cases illustrate that the approach and activities are not only seen as relevant for young people, who have been the main target group of activities. As shown in case #4, activities can be adjusted to fit adults as well, and there can be an idea in expanding the approach of the AFD to also include children (#3). Mohammed Gaber says:

*“The only challenge that I am facing is the material of AFD is not really designed for children. The language, the terminology everything, it is not designed for children. So I used to struggle to try to simplify it and use the children friendly language.”*

A similar challenge has been experienced regarding adults, and a special version for adults has been developed in Jordan (#4). The study thus shows that as the existing AFD material is suited for different groups of youth, the demand for dialogue activities amongst children and adults might indicate a relevance of developing activities to also suit these target groups.

#### 5.5 Anchoring of dialogue activities

The selected best practice cases illustrate different ways of anchoring dialogue in the various settings. A few can be summed up here and maybe serve as inspiration in the future work of the AFD programme:

### **Anchoring through the involvement of teachers and other professionals**

The cases illustrate how the dialogue can be anchored in schools (e.g. #4, #5, #6 and #7) through the involvement of teachers. In these cases, teachers have been driving forces in inviting the AFD and creating a framework for dialogue activities. As we have seen, several of the teachers have afterwards chosen to use selected exercises in their classes, because they have seen them having a positive impact on the students. Furthermore, in case #4, the ambassador was asked to conduct two evening workshops for some of the teachers, who wanted to work more with dialogue in their own classes. Involving the teachers in dialogue activities in their classes, or offering separate workshops for the teachers can be one way of making sure that dialogue is anchored in educational institutions.

### **Anchoring through governmental institutions, NGO's, centres etc.**

Similarly, the extended impact study shows that dialogue can be anchored through activities in institutions such as governmental units, NGO's etc. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (Case #3) is a good example of how dialogue activities can become an integrated part of capacity building efforts in different types of programmes. In the two programmes involved in the study, capacity building seminars are held regularly, and on the initiative of an ambassador employed at the National Council, AFD dialogue activities have become an integrated part of these seminars – and now seem to be spreading to other programmes at the Council.

Selmya movement is another example of how dialogue has been made an integrated part of the workshops offered to network members, which means that dialogue activities reach a large group of participants and potentially spreads even further as a consequence of a demand from other organisations participating in the network of Selmya (#2). Furthermore the Princess Basma Centre is an example of how dialogue has spread through workshops held in the centre, and is now implemented in other initiatives based in the centre (#4).

### **Anchoring through ambassadors**

Another type of anchoring of the dialogue can be seen as a result of dedicated ambassadors, who offer their help to interested participants after workshops. An example of this is Zeyad in Ma'an who was contacted by Abeer, who wished to develop a new initiative based on dialogue after attending dialogue workshops. The willingness of ambassadors to continuously participate in discussions about how to implement dialogue in new settings, and their own initiatives in e.g. implementing dialogue activities in their workplaces and other spheres of activity (e.g. #2 and #3) represent important ways of anchoring dialogue.

## **5.6 Challenges to the effect of dialogue activities**

The positive change described in this best practice analysis of the seven cases, does not mean that challenges to the programme do not exist. As we have seen in the very first paragraph of this report, a best practise analysis allows for a focus on the things that work, more than on the challenges experienced.

However especially one central challenge described by interviewees is worth having a quick look at. Across cases, the interviewees describe challenges with having difficulties when approaching people and institutions not affected by dialogue activities. And this takes us back to the first paragraph of this chapter, which focuses on the setting in which dialogue activities are implemented.

Interviewees describe the frustration of having a very positive and "eye-opening" experience with a workshop, and then the frustration, when they try to apply dialogue in their relation to other people. This can be in relation to teachers, who do not have an interest in adjusting the classes in order to give the students more time to talk (#5); Government officials who do not listen enough (#3); people in the local community who talk, but do not listen (#1); Family, friends or church members, who make fun of the dialogical approach and are very quick to point out, if participants promoting dialogue happen to interrupt themselves (#1).

*One participant phrases it this way: "We are all agreeing that it was the first time for us to be heard and to actually matter our opinion, but once we got out of the workshop we felt that we are not being heard and they do not matter again."*

*An ambassador agrees: "Sometimes we hear from teachers and parents, especially in regards to the youth, that when they discuss with their families or other friends who don't have the culture of dialogue, so they will start mimicking them and make fun of them."*

*A participant says about one episode at her church: "Within my church a group of people that are very diverse in age and gender and background. We had a project that we had to do at church, but there was a lot of disagreement, so I tried to do an exercise to help the group do the task, but I was not really successful because I could not really implement it like what has been done in the workshop (...) So the group actually started observing me, because I used to say 'please don't interrupt', so whenever I interrupted someone, they would like to say 'don't interrupt'."*

Throughout the cases of the study, we hear participating students ask for dialogical training of teachers and parents, teachers ask for training of more students, and managers ask for training of employees. Thus an implementation targeting the organisation as a whole is suggested in order to maximise the impact and in addition to make it viable.