

DIPD DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION COURSES



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DANISH INSTITUTE FOR
PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

It is within DIPD's mandate to *“support party-to-party cooperation and the development of democratic parties in developing countries.”* Delivering on this mandate requires dialogue and trust between parties, and it is thus crucial for DIPD to prioritise and invest in dialogue facilitation and conflict management.

DIALOGUE AS A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

For DIPD dialogue is also a strategy for change. Especially so in young democracies and countries characterized by deep internal divisions, cooperation and dialogue between the political parties contribute to a more balanced and less conflict-ridden political environment. It also paves the way for reaching common solutions to difficult challenges. Cooperation and dialogue also result in a better understanding of political opponents and thus opportunities to reach settlements and joint reform measures aimed at improving the overall framework for the party system.

DIALOGUE A PRIORITY FOR ACTION

DIPD thus helps strengthen political dialogue and cooperation between parties in a multi-party system.

We work together with partners to create and use platforms to promote interparty dialogue and communication between the parties and other political and non-political actors. We will also assist our partners in working together on developing reform initiatives relating to the conduct of parties and party members, particularly in connection to elections.

Thus DIPD has together with the Danish Political Parties developed a number of workshops and training modules aimed at facilitating constructive dialogue and effective conflict mediation.

Hanne Lund Madsen
Head of Global Programmes, DIPD

PURPOSE AND TARGET GROUP OF TRAINING

Dialogue is important but, it is also often hard even to get the dialogue started. Or the dialogue has developed into a series of unproductive self-assertive communications. Sometimes the dialogue reveals new dimensions of conflict and thus productive dialogue needs to be accompanied by good skills in dialogue facilitation and in handling and mitigation conflict.

Party politics is filled with conflicts, and the interparty dialogue is often a complex mix of competition and cooperation, where both constructive dialogue and destructive fights for power exist simultaneously. However, conflicts and lack of trust within the party organization is an obstacle to progress and peaceful cooperation towards a better society. To learn how to recognize, analyze, understand and especially handle and prevent conflicts is important for the development of democracy worldwide. Preventing conflicts begins with the ability to create constructive dialogues, which requires skills of communication and facilitation.

In fact our experience shows us that understanding the conflict is as important as engaging in the dialogue.

The target group for the workshops or training modules is first and foremost the political party partners of DIPD, who wants a more profound understanding of conflict and dialogue concerning the political work and the interparty dialogues. The course can be held in Denmark or in any of the DIPD partnership countries by a competent facilitator, whether local or a DIPD representative from Denmark.

DIPD can provide guidance, support and supervision before, under and after a course for local facilitators, who need an experienced colleague to discuss any element of the course with.

The purpose is to build capacity to engage constructively in dialogue and solve conflicts in the situations where they occur. The course comprises three course modules, aiming at providing the necessary knowledge and skills for engaging in constructive dialogues.

MODULES

- Module A: Understanding dialogue and conflict - the introductory module
- Module B: Conflict resolution
- Module C: Dialogue facilitation

DIPD partners can choose from the three modules all concerned with interparty dialogue and conflict resolution. However, it is strongly recommended to begin with the introductory module, concerning the basic understanding of and skills related to conflicts and dialogues.

After completing the introductory module, it is possible to participate in both module B and C or to choose between them. Module B concerns achieving more elaborate skills to tackle conflicts through various communication tools. Module C concerns creating and facilitating constructive dialogues and meetings.

The content of the individual modules can be adjusted to suit the specific group of participants. The module content outlined below will form the basis for any adjustments.

TRAINING CONTENT & TRAINERS

All three modules address the intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural aspects of conflicts. It is a highly participative and engaging learning style with direct relevance to the actual situations of each participants. The training is developed drawing on the long dialogue and conflict mediation tradition within Danish parties and uses the hands-on experiences of experienced politicians as well as best global practices. DIPD uses highly qualified trainers with hands-on experience from party politics.

MODULE A: Understanding dialogue and conflict (introductory module) – a 1-2 days' workshop

The objective of the introductory module is to understand the basic elements involved in conflicts and dialogue in general as well as related to the participants' own party and political context. Furthermore, the aim is for the participants to reflect on their own way of engaging in and/or preventing conflicts, and to obtain basic communication skills useful for creating constructive the interparty dialogues.

Content

1. Understanding the conflict:

What is dialogue? What is political dialogue?

Discussion or dialogue

Defining interparty dialogue

Case 1: The blessing of power – when you finally get what you want

Case 2: The infight between the old and young members in a local party branch

Case 3: Own choice of case

Conflict staircase – escalation and de-escalation

Dimensions in conflicts

2. Meeting the conflict:

The way we look at the world – interpretation & communication

Own conflict style and habits

Win:Win attitude – in a political context - is it possible?

3. Creating dialogue:

Practicing dialogue incl. active listening and mirroring

Using nonviolent communication to open up a conflict

Transparency and clarity

The importance of a clear mandate

MODULE B: How to resolve a conflict? – a 1-2 days' workshop

The objective of module B is to obtain a more profound understanding of conflicts and gain skills to create code of conducts and provide counseling to others, concerning how to manage conflicts. This can be used both within the party itself or in the interparty setting or possibly also within a coalition of parties wanting to be better at mitigating conflicts within the coalition.

Content

Managing conflicts

Conflict counselling – supporting others to resolve their conflicts

Mediation – a short introduction

Conflicts in groups – how to design processes to handle conflict within groups

Case 4: Spain and Catalonia

Article by Gerry Adams, President of Sein Fein, regarding the conflict between Spain and Catalonia

Case 5: Own choice

Developing a culture that can deal with conflicts constructively including creating a code of conduct conflict management

MODULE C: Leading the dialogue and dialogical meetings – a 1-2 days' workshop

The objective of module C is to understand the complexity of dialogical processes, and to enable the participants to take responsibility for creating and facilitating dialogical meetings and group dialogues that prevent conflicts and nurture constructive and peaceful dialogues. This can be useful both within the party itself, in the relations with other parties or within party groups or coalitions.

Content

1. Understanding group dialogue:

Dialogue is Democracy - Democracy is much more than a parliamentary structure

- Inclusion/exclusion
- The hidden powers

How to structure and lead dialogical processes

Principles of interparty dialogue

2. Training group dialogue:

Gamemaster skills

- How to be present and still have the process overview

Exercises – being the leader of processes

Meeting resistance and how to deal with resistance as a resource

Understanding Deep Democracy in practice

3. Self-reflection and personal challenges

When can you take the role as a facilitator – and when not! Neutral/partial

Your own role and attitude

- Avoiding the resistance - neglecting it
- Reacting to resistance with counter-resistance/pressure (will escalate conflict)
- Recognize the resistance and accept it
- Consider the resistance as a resource, embrace, investigate and find better solutions together

The three levels of resistance (to change, to dialogue) and how to handle it constructively

How to best engage with those types of resistance to change.

Practicing the constructive dialogue

MASTERCOURSE

Finally, DIPD is venturing with Danida Fellowship Centre to offer the annual two week master course in Dialogue and Conflict transformation held in Denmark each October/November (see www.dfcentre.com). In November 2017 in all 14 DIPD partner party representatives took part in this master course and gave very high recommendations to political peers.

NEXT STEP

The course modules are offered to existing DIPD partners. Contact DIPD to learn more about the opportunities for joining a training or having an in-house training or workshop conducted.

Contact information

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“ *Democracy is a dialogue. DIPD's work revolves around strengthening political dialogue abroad. This applies to the dialogue that takes place both within and between political parties. DIPD's work is also about ensuring that everyone can participate in this dialogue, including women, young people, and those who live in more remote areas of the country.*

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